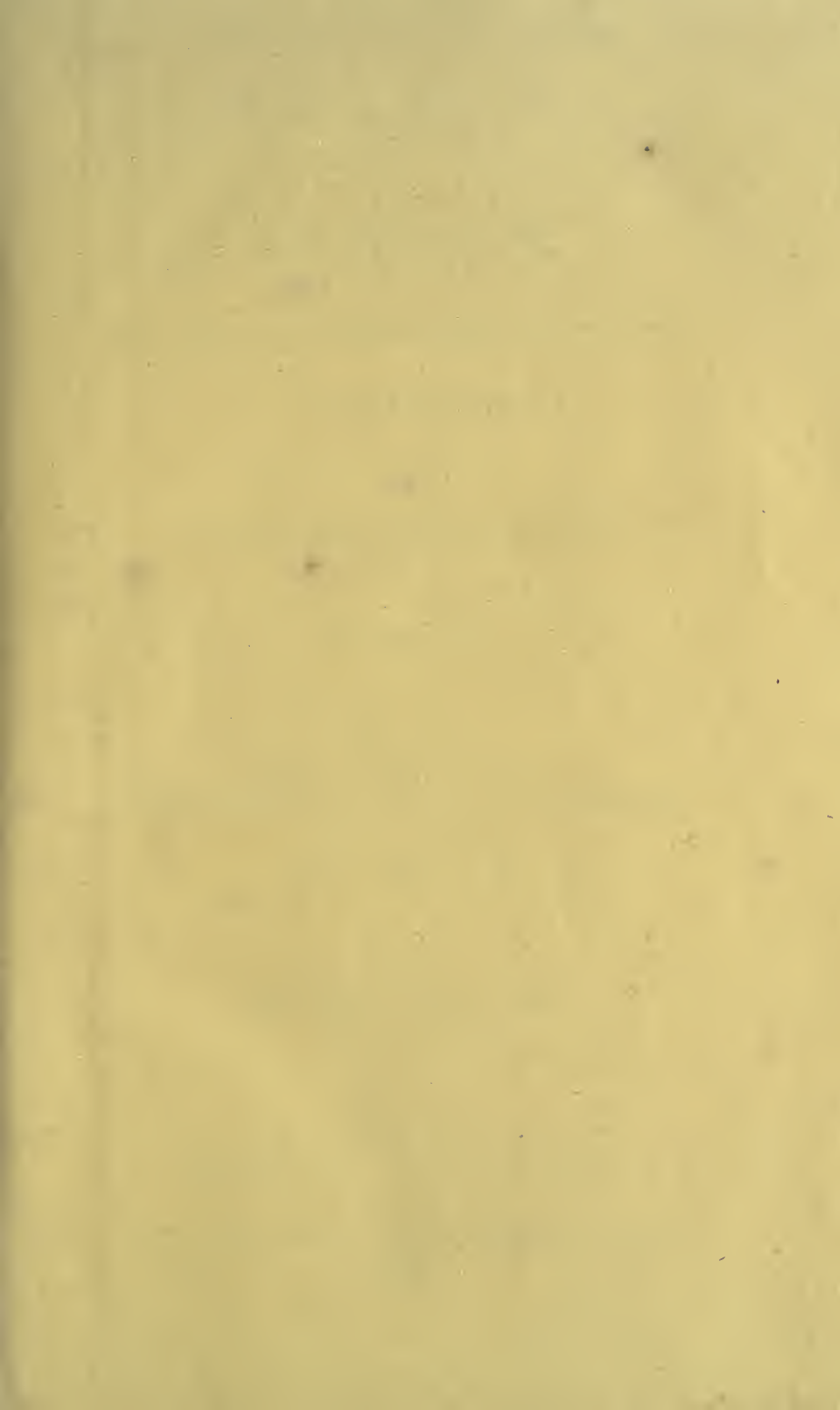




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Rev. R. F. Wilson

with J. K.'s affectionate
regards.

PRIMITIVE TRADITION RECOGNISED IN HOLY SCRIPTURE:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF WINCHESTER,

AT THE VISITATION

OF THE WORSHIPFUL AND REVEREND

WILLIAM DEALTRY, D.D.

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE,

SEPTEMBER 27, 1836.

THIRD EDITION,

WITH A POSTSCRIPT,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF SOME POINTS IN THE ARGUMENT OF THE SERMON:

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED,

CATENA PATRUM, No. III.

(BEING NO. LXXVIII. OF "THE TRACTS FOR THE TIMES.")

BY THE

REV. JOHN KEBLE, M.A.

VICAR OF HURSLEY,

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“ It is not here intended that the doctrine of the Church should be the rule of faith distinctly from, much less against, the Scripture; for that were a contradiction, to suppose the Church, and yet speaking and acting against the will of God; but it means, that where the question is concerning an obscure place of Scripture, the practice of the Catholic Church is the best commentary.”—Bp. Taylor, vi. 521. Ed. Heber.

TO THE WORSHIPFUL AND REVEREND

WILLIAM DEALTRY, D.D.

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF WINTON;

AND TO THE REVEREND THE CLERGY OF THE DEANERIES MEETING

AT WINCHESTER;

THIS SERMON

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED :

HAVING BEEN PREACHED BEFORE THEM,

AND BEING NOW PUBLISHED IN DEFERENCE TO THEIR EXPRESSED

WISH

OF EXAMINING AT THEIR LEISURE THE STATEMENTS

THEREIN CONTAINED.

A
S E R M O N,
&c.

2 TIM. i. 14.

THAT GOOD THING WHICH WAS COMMITTED UNTO THEE KEEP BY THE
HOLY GHOST WHICH DWELLETH IN US.

ΤΗΝ ΚΑΛΗΝ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΤΑΘΗΚΗΝ ΦΥΛΑΞΟΝ ΔΙΑ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ
'ΑΓΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ 'ΕΝΟΙΚΟΥΝΤΟΣ 'ΕΝ 'ΗΜΙΝ.

WHATEVER men may severally anticipate concerning the final issue of the many anxious discussions which at present occupy the Catholic Church in England, all, I suppose, must feel that for the time they occasion a great perplexity and doubtfulness of mind. We are beset on every side (the clergy more especially) with conflicting difficulties, and temptations to unworthy compromise. That man must be either very confident in the accuracy of his own views, or very highly favoured in respect of clearness of judgment, or very successful in keeping himself out of the way of all controversy, who has not repeatedly found himself at a loss, within the last seven years, on such points as the following :—What are the limits of the civil power in ecclesiastical matters, and how far we may venture in the way of submission without

sacrifice of church principle : how the freedom of the Anglican church may be vindicated against the exorbitant claims of Rome, and yet no disparagement ensue of the authority inherent in the Catholic Apostolical Church : again, how the method of voluntary combination, so generally resorted to in our days for important ecclesiastical objects, may be reconciled with entire deference to episcopal prerogative ; how CHRIST'S ministers may " study to be quiet," and yet do their duty as watchmen, and not let their people slumber in the midst of danger ; and how they may best unite unwearied meekness in judging, and active Christian love, with strict reserve and timely censure towards every one that walketh disorderly. The time was, not long since, when many of these points appeared to most of us as mere historical curiosities. We felt, perhaps, that they were, abstractedly, of grave importance, but we thanked GOD that our lot was cast in times which required not of us, as pastors and stewards in CHRIST'S service, any distinct consideration and settled views concerning them. Now things are different : the course of God's providence has permitted the enemies or prompted the defenders of the Church to lay bare her very foundations ; and it has become imperative on us all, in discharge of our ordination vows, to make up our minds as well as we can, and endeavour to see our own way, on

points which we should gladly, if we might, have taken on trust.

It cannot be safe to shrink from this duty, and say, as many seem inclined to do, that we could bear persecution itself better than the perplexity of considering such things, or the responsibility of deciding for ourselves, and agitating others, concerning them. We have put our hand to the plough, and we must not — we dare not — look back. It is too late for sworn and ordained priests and ministers in the Church of God to dream of drawing back from responsibility. The nature of the case contradicts the very thought. For what responsibility can be more fearful than *his*, who indolently and unthinkingly gives his assent to changes, which, for aught he knows, may prove not only ruinous in the event, but in theory and principle also opposed to the truths and ordinances wherewith CHRIST has put him in trust? Dismissing, therefore, as a snare of our great enemy, the false comfort which many of us, perhaps, are too much inclined to take to ourselves, from a notion that by not interfering we keep ourselves irresponsible, let us see whether the unprejudiced study of those parts of Scripture, which are obviously best suited to our case, may not supply us with a better and more genuine comfort, by furnishing some one clear and unquestionable rule, which may go a good way in guiding us rightly,

independent of all results : showing us where our chief responsibility lies, and to which, among interests and duties apparently conflicting, we are bound always to give the preference.

It is natural, in such an inquiry, to turn immediately to the two Epistles to Timothy, especially the last. For, undoubtedly, it must have been to that holy Bishop a time of very great perplexity, when his guide and father in the faith was on the eve of departing from him : the heretics also, as appears from many passages, already beginning to infest the Asiatic churches, according to St. Paul's own prophecy. It appears from the opening of the second Epistle, that when all doubt was taken away as to St. Paul's approaching martyrdom, his affectionate disciple was in danger of being overwhelmed by his sorrow for so great a loss, joined to his sense of the heavy burden which would be laid on himself, now left comparatively alone. To these two feelings in the breast of Timothy the Apostle in his farewell letter addresses himself : remembering, as he says ¹, the tears which Timothy had shed, perhaps when they had last parted from each other, and longing the more for the satisfaction of seeing him again. In the mean time, there are two words, which he seems studiously to repeat again and again, that he may leave them

¹ Ch. iii. 4.

sounding, as it were, in his disciple's ears, for remembrancers of the two duties most pressing at the moment: ΚΑΚΟΠΑΘΗΣΩΝ, and ΠΑΡΑΚΑΤΑΘΗΚΗ: "endure hardness," and "keep that committed to thy charge."

First, with reference to the dejection of mind, by which Timothy was then suffering: "endure hardness," says the Apostle ¹, "as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST;" "endure ² affliction, make full proof of thy ministry;" "be thou ³ partaker of the affliction of the Gospel, according to the power of GOD." The drift of all which warnings is the same as where he reminds the Thessalonians ⁴, "When we were "with you, we told you that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know." Affliction, hardness, trial, tribulation, is the very atmosphere of the gospel ministry; we never had cause to expect anything else. "Do not, therefore," (so the Apostle implies,) "do not shrink thus over-tenderly from the thought of losing me, which, "you now see, comes into your ordained portion "of trouble." "Be not ashamed of the testimony "of our LORD, nor of me his prisoner;" do not carry your affectionate regret so far as almost to cause an appearance of defective faith. Do not take it to heart so very bitterly, as if you in some sort regretted your Christian engagement, finding so

¹ Ch. ii. 3.

² Ch. iv. 5.

³ Ch. i. 8.

⁴ 1 Thess. iii. 4.

much to be borne beyond your expectation; as if you were sorry that you had put so much confidence in me. But, instead of vain regret, take comfort in doing your duty; resort to that fountain of supernatural grace which was opened for you when you were consecrated to be an Apostle. “Remember that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands. For the SPIRIT which we both of us then received was not a spirit of fear,” of unworthy sadness and cowardice; excessive, unreasonable dejection can be no fruit of it. Such were the tender expostulations and chidings of St. Paul, well beseeming the kindest and most thoughtful of parents recalling his own son in the faith to a manly firmness. Then, in the temper of a noble and true soldier, he propounds his own example, teaches his younger comrade the way of consolation which he found most effectual for himself. “Because I am ordained a herald and apostle and teacher, I suffer these things: but I am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” And elsewhere¹, “I suffer evil, as a malefactor, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound.” What can be more animating, what more affecting, than to witness a per-

¹ Ch. ii. 9.

son like St. Paul, full of conscious energy, power, and usefulness, thus devoutly reconciling himself to that which, humanly speaking, would have seemed the most untimely interruption of his labours? It is clear, I think, that even St. Paul found this a severe struggle; but he cheers himself, as in his former imprisonment; when he wrote to the Philippians, that the taunts of his enemies on his confinement had turned out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel, causing his bonds in CHRIST to be spoken of in the palace of the Cæsars, and in all places: so that even those who in speaking of his sufferings meant nothing but envy and strife, did in a manner preach CHRIST, *i. e.* make His Gospel known, and draw popular attention to His Name¹. Such I take to be the true meaning of that often alleged text; far from conveying the encouragement, which some think they find in it, to irregular and schismatical efforts, but fraught with abundant consolation for those, who being anxious for the Church in evil times, feel themselves precluded from active exertions on her behalf. They can always say to themselves, "The Word of GOD is not bound: He can make even envy and strife involuntary heralds of His cause." Their fidelity in acting while they could is rewarded with the assurance of a strong faith, that when *their* work is over, God's eternal and

¹ See Note (A) in the Appendix.

glorious work is still in progress, although they cannot see how.

But we dare not take this comfort to ourselves,—we dare not, in those instances where we find the Church bound and fettered, mitigate our regret by exulting remembrance of the expansive inherent force of divine truth,—except we be really, in some tolerable measure, doing our best for her, so far as we are at liberty. The sense of our own responsibility, and of our faithfulness to it, must lie at the root of all true and solid consolation. To this, therefore, as the one thing needful, both for the cause and for himself, the Apostle most emphatically bespeaks his disciple's attention. He loses no opportunity of reminding him of the *παρακαταθήκη*, the charge, trust, deposit, which had been left jointly in both their hands, and in the hands of all commissioned as they were. Observe how naturally, with what dexterity of affection, he passes from the mention of his own trust to that of the same trust as committed to Timothy: “I am not ashamed, for I know in
 “whom I have believed, and am persuaded that
 “He is able to keep my deposit, *τὴν παρακαταθήκην*
 “*μου*, against that day. Hold fast the form,” or,
 “abide by the pattern or standard, of wholesome
 “words which thou hast heard from me, by faith
 “and love which is in CHRIST JESUS. That good
 “thing committed unto thee” (literally, the good
 and noble deposit) “keep, by the HOLY GHOST

“ which dwelleth in us.” Surely these are words in which we ourselves are concerned, as deeply as he was, to whom they were first written. We are so far in Timothy’s case, that we are full of sorrow and perplexity at the condition in which we find the Church and Body of CHRIST JESUS : we would fain lay hold of Timothy’s and St. Paul’s consolation : let us first see to it, that we neglect not the warning given. To the companion of Apostles that warning was plain and simple. The duty imposed on him, paramount to all others, was simply to keep safe and entire a certain trust committed to his charge ; to that one vital object all considerations of present expediency, temporal comfort, visible, apparent edification, were to give way. What that treasure was, Timothy could not be ignorant ; nor yet could he be doubtful as to the celestial aid, by which, if not wanting to himself, he would surely be enabled to preserve it. But in both respects some consideration is requisite, before we of this day can fully apply the case to ourselves. It is not obvious at first sight, what this trust or treasure was : nor (of course) whether we are partakers of it : and even supposing those points settled, there might still remain a doubt, whether we have the same help for the faithful discharge of our trust, the HOLY GHOST dwelling in us. The consideration of these points in their order may not unfitly employ us on the present occasion.

1. And, first, as to the exact notion which we are to attach to the word *παρακαταθήκη*, “trust or deposit,” in this place: I observe that the very use of so general a word with the article implies that it had been by that time received among Christians as a term (if one may so speak) of their own, a part of the vocabulary of the holy Catholic Church. A diligent eye may detect, in St. Paul’s Epistles, many traces of the like use of language: current sayings, or senses of words, or formulæ, which the Apostle only just alludes to, as well known to all his readers. For instance, the expression, “This is a faithful saying,” which occurs repeatedly in these later Epistles, indicates, in all probability, so many Christian proverbs, familiar in the mouths of that generation of believers. Thus, in the first Epistle to Timothy, we have, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men “to be received, that ‘CHRIST JESUS came into “the world to save sinners¹:’ This is a faithful “saying, ‘If a man desire the office of a Bishop, “he desireth a good work²;’ This is a faithful “saying, ‘That therefore we both labour and suffer reproof, because we trust in the living God, “who is the Saviour of all men, especially of “them that believe³.’” In the second Epistle⁴, “It is a faithful saying, ‘If we be dead with Him, “we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we

¹ Ch. i. 15.

² Ch. iii. 1.

³ Ch. iv. 9, 10.

⁴ Ch. ii. 11.

“shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He “also will deny us.” And to Titus, after a brief summary of the gospel way of salvation, which by the exact rhythm and order of its members might almost appear to be part of a primitive hymn ¹, St. Paul adds the same clause, “Faithful “is the saying.” From all which I argue, that there was a certain set of “sayings” current among the Christians of that time, to which any allusion or appeal, however brief, would be presently understood. Nor will it be hard to find examples of single words, which had evidently acquired by that time a Christian sense; so that, even when used absolutely, they could only be taken by Christians in a particular relation: such words, I mean, as τὸ μυστήριον, for “the scheme of super-
“natural truth revealed in the Gospel, and more
“especially in the doctrine of our LORD’s incarna-
“tion;” ὁ ἐχθρὸς, for “the evil spirit;” ἡ ὁδὸς, for
“the profession of Christianity.” These, and other examples which might be mentioned, make it surely not incredible, that ἡ παρακαταθήκη, “the deposit,
“trust, or charge,” conveyed to Christian ears in those days a peculiar and definite, I had almost said a technical, meaning.

Now both this word and its kindred term, ἡ ἐντολὴ, “the commandment,” are mentioned in connection with errors to be avoided in *doctrine*.

¹ See Note (B) in the Appendix.

Thus, Timothy is warned¹ to “keep the deposit, “avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.” Again, on mention made of the good confession, made by the same Timothy before many witnesses, at the time of his first calling to eternal life,—which “good confession” can only mean the Apostles’ Creed, or some corresponding formula, recited at baptism,—St. Paul proceeds thus: “I exhort thee before GOD and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep *the commandment* without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.” Does not this appear as if “the confession” in the former verse had suggested the caution about “the commandment” or “commission” in the latter? and if so, what more probable than that “the commission” means the same treasure of doctrine which we know to have been embodied in the Confession or Creed?

This interpretation of the noun *παρακαταθήκη*, “deposit,” is confirmed by the repeated use of the kindred verb, *παρατίθεσθαι*, “to entrust, or commit,” in reference to Christian doctrine. For example, “This *commandment* I *commit* unto thee, son Timothy, that thou mightest charge some that they *preach no other doctrine* ².” Elsewhere (a passage which seems to be sufficient alone to warrant the

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 20.

² 1 Tim. i. 18, 3.

proposed interpretation) Timothy is instructed concerning the things which he had heard from St. Paul "before many witnesses," *i. e.* as it should seem, at a kind of public charge at his ordination:—these he is directed to commit or entrust "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also ¹." Ability to *teach* is the thing required: it is plain, therefore, that the test related principally to *doctrine* ²:

Further, it will be observed that the phrase of the Apostle is absolute: *the* trust, not *your* trust; the great trust of all, in which whosoever participates has reason to consider himself especially responsible to the great Judge of heaven and earth. And it is implied that the charge of St. Paul and that of Timothy were one and the same. "Keep the good deposit," says the Apostle, "by the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth in us." Now, what St. Paul's trust was, the trust uppermost in his heart, he himself teaches, exclaiming, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith* ³." He does not say, "I have kept the flock, I have kept those left in my charge;" but, "I have kept the *faith*, the *truth* of CHRIST, the *doctrine* of the Gospel. I have watched it, and preserved it entire." Great as

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

² See Note (C) in the Appendix.

³ 2 Tim. iv. 7.

was the holy Apostle's anxiety for the souls which GOD had put under his care, his anxiety for the system of CHRIST, the kingdom of heaven, did at that moment apparently engross him more entirely. And it is clearly probable, that what he felt himself to be the main care, the chief trust of all, that he would recommend to his disciple in such words as those of the text, "That good thing which is committed unto thee, keep;" especially considering that those words immediately follow a caution which can only relate to doctrinal formulæ: "Hold fast," as a model for thyself, "the form of sound words," the course of healthful, orthodox interpretations and doctrines, "which thou hast heard of me." That "form of sound words," is it not obviously the same with "the good deposit" in the next verse?

Thus the context leads to the same exposition which, as we have seen, the parallel passages suggest—an exposition ratified also by the general consent of Christian antiquity. The good deposit is commonly understood by the Fathers to mean the *truths* committed by St. Paul to Timothy. Thus, in the paraphrase ascribed to St. Jerome¹: "Watch over the deposit of the faith, entrusted to thy keeping by us. What thou hast not heard

¹ "Commendatum a nobis servandum tibi fidei depositum custodi. Quod a me non audisti, nec ab angelo si dicatur, libenter admittas." T. ix. 388. ed. Froben. Basil.

of me, though it were spoken by an angel, receive it not willingly." And a venerable father of the third century, Hippolytus, having quoted the expressions, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy charge," and, "The things which thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men," remarks¹ that "the blessed Apostle used religious "care in delivering these *truths*, which were "easily accessible to all." And Vincent of Lerins²; "Keep," says the Apostle, "that which is committed to thy charge: *the Catholic faith*, as a talent, preserve thou inviolate and unalloyed."

¹ "Ορα δὲ μὴ εἰς ἀπίστους καὶ βλασφήμους γλώσσας ἐγκαταθῆ ταῦτα κίνδυνος γὰρ οὐχ ὁ τυχῶν μετὰδος δὲ εὐλαβέσι καὶ πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις τοῖς ἐθέλουσιν ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως μετὰ φόβου ζῆν· οὐ γὰρ μάτην ὁ μακάριος Ἀπόστολος παραινῶν Τιμοθέῳ λέγει· ὦ Τιμόθεε, τὴν παρακαταθήκην φύλαξον, ἐκτρεπόμενος, κ. τ. λ. Καὶ πάλιν . . . ἃ ἤκουσας παρ' ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν παρακλησέων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, κ. τ. λ. Εἰ οὖν ὁ μακάριος μετ' εὐλαβείας παρείδου ταῦτα, ἅπερ ἅπασιν εὐγνωστα ἦν, βλέπων τῷ Πνεύματι, ὅτι οὐ πάντων ἦν ἡ πίστις· πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν, εἰ ἀπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγια μεταδώσομεν βεβήλοις καὶ ἀναξίοις ἀνδράσιν; Dem. de Christo et Antichristo, ap. Biblioth. Patrum, Gallandi, t. ii. p. 418.

² Commonit. c. xxii. "Quid est *depositum*? id est, quod tibi creditum est, non quod a te inventum; quod accepisti, non quod excogitasti; rem non ingenii, sed doctrinæ; non usurpationis privatæ, sed publicæ traditionis; rem ad te perductam, non a te prolatam; in qua non auctor debes esse, sed custos; non institutor, sed sectator; non ducens, sed sequens. '*Depositum*,' inquit, '*custodi*;' *catholicæ fidei talentum* inviolatum illibatumque conserva."

Upon the whole, we may assume with some confidence that the good thing left in Timothy's charge, thus absolutely to be kept at all events, was the treasure of apostolical doctrines and church rules¹: the rules and doctrines which made up the charter of CHRIST's kingdom.

2. The next question to be settled is, whether the precept in the text apply literally to us: *i. e.* in other words, whether we have yet in our possession the identical deposit which St. Paul left with Timothy. For, *if* we have, mere natural piety would teach us to reverence and guard it as he was required to do.

Some will reply to this question at once, We have the Holy Scriptures, and we know for certain that they contain all that is important in Timothy's trust. These would resolve the custody of the good deposit into the simple duty of preserving the Scriptures incorrupt, and maintaining them in their due estimation among Christians. Undoubtedly this would be in some respects the least troublesome, if it could be proved the most correct and dutiful way. But can it be so proved?

We are naturally, if not reasonably, jealous of the word Tradition, associated as it is in our minds

¹ The insertion of "Church Rules" here has been objected to, as not being warranted by the preceding citations. But the sacraments, at least, were from the beginning Church Rules; and were not they part of the trust committed to Timothy, in common with all "Stewards of the mysteries of God?"

with the undue claims and pernicious errors of Rome. Yet must it not be owned, on fair consideration, that Timothy's deposit did comprise matter, independent of, and distinct from, the truths which are directly Scriptural? that it contained, besides the substance of Christian doctrine, a certain form, arrangement, selection, methodizing the whole, and distinguishing fundamentals; and also a certain system of church practice, both in government, discipline, and worship; of which, whatever portion we can prove to be still remaining, ought to be religiously guarded by us, even for the same reason that we reverence and retain that which is more properly scriptural, both being portions of the same divine treasure.

To these conclusions we are led by the consideration, first, that the truths and rules committed to Timothy's charge were at the time almost or wholly unwritten. This is clear from the very date of the Epistles which mention that charge: the latest of which must have been composed many years before St. John's gospel, and in the first of them the deposit in question is spoken of, not as an incomplete thing on its progress towards perfection, but as something so wholly sufficient, so unexceptionably accurate, as to require nothing but fidelity in its transmitters¹. The holy writings themselves intimate, that the

¹ 1 Tim. i. 3; vi. 14, 20.

persons to whom they were addressed were in possession of a body of truth and duty, totally distinct from themselves and independent of them. Timothy, for instance, a few verses after the text, is enjoined to take measures for the transmission, not of holy Scripture, but of the things which he had heard of St. Paul among many witnesses¹. The Thessalonians had been exhorted to hold the traditions which they had received, whether by word or apostolical letter². They could not be exhorted to hold the Christian Scriptures, since at that time in all probability no Christian Scriptures yet existed, except perhaps St. Matthew's gospel. Much later we find St. Peter declaring to the whole body of Oriental Christians, that in neither of his Epistles did he profess to reveal to them any new truth or duty, but to "stir up their minds" "by way of remembrance of the commandment of the Apostles of the LORD and SAVIOUR³." St. John refers believers, for a standard of doctrine, to the word which they had heard from the beginning⁴, and intimates that it was sufficient for their Christian communion if that word abode in them. If the Word, the Commandment, the Tradition, which the latest of these holy writers severally commend in these and similar passages, meant only or chiefly the Scriptures before written, would

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

² 2 Thess. ii. 15.

³ 2 S. Pet. iii. 1.

⁴ 1 S. John ii. 24.

there not appear a more significant mention of those Scriptures ; something nearer the tone of our own divines, when they are delivering precepts on the Rule of Faith ? As it is, the phraseology of the Epistles exactly concurs with what we should be led to expect : that the Church would be already in possession of the substance of saving Truth, in a sufficiently systematic form, by the sole teaching of the Apostles. As long as that teaching itself, or the accurate recollection of it, remained in the world, it must have constituted a standard or measure of Christian knowledge, though it had never seemed good to the Almighty to confer on us the additional boon of the books of the New Testament.

It can hardly be necessary to remind this audience, that these scattered notices are abundantly confirmed by the direct and formal testimony of the ecclesiastical writers of the age immediately following the Apostles. As often as Tertullian and Irenæus have false teachers to reprove, or unevangelical corruptions to expose, do they not refer to the tradition of the whole Church, as to something independent of the written word, and sufficient at that time to refute heresy, even alone ? Do they not employ Church tradition as parallel to Scripture, not as derived from it ? and consequently as fixing the interpretation of disputed texts, not simply by the judgment of the

Church, but by authority of that HOLY SPIRIT which inspired the oral teaching itself, of which such tradition is the record. Their practice is throughout in accordance with the following sentence of Irenæus¹:—" We ought not to be still seeking among others for the truth, which it is easy to receive from the Church ; since therein, as in a rich depository, the Apostles did most abundantly lodge all things appertaining to the truth : so that whoever will, may receive from her the waters of life. For the Church is the entrance to life : all the rest are but thieves and robbers. . . . And what if the Apostles themselves had left us no Scriptures ? Ought we not to follow the course of tradition, such as they delivered it to those whom they entrusted with the Churches ? Which rule is followed by many nations of the barbarians, those I mean who believe in Christ, without paper or ink, having salvation written in their hearts by the SPIRIT, and diligently keeping the old tradition." Then having recited the substance of the Apostles' Creed as a specimen of that tradition, he adds, " this faith those who without letters have believed, in respect of our language are indeed barbarians, but in respect of their views, habits, and conversation, have attained by faith a very high measure of illumination, and please GOD,

¹ See Note (D) in Appendix.

walking in all justice, chastity, and wisdom. And if any one should relate to them in their own languages the new inventions of the heretics, they would presently shut their ears and escape as far as possible, not enduring so much as to hear the profane discourse." This noble passage I the rather quote, because it shews that the case which was just now put, of persons left without the Scriptures to depend on tradition alone, is not a mere dream of imagination, but at that time actually existed in some parts of the Christian world. There were instances, it seems, known to Irenæus, of true believers who did not as yet know any thing of the New Testament, yet were able to stop the mouths of heretics by merely avouching the ancient apostolical tradition. As was the condition, duty, and privileges, of those faithful and simple men, such would have been those of the whole Christian world, had the inspired Scriptures either remained unwritten, or perished with so many other monuments of antiquity. Faith in those divine truths with which the Church was originally entrusted would still have been required at the hands of Christian men; but the task of ascertaining those truths would have been far harder and more delicate. Now that it has pleased our gracious God to bestow on us, over and above, the use of His written word, can we be justified in slighting the original gift, on pretence of being able to do without it? Surely, in

whatever respect any tradition is really apostolical, to think lightly of it must be the same *kind* of sin, as if those unlearned and remote Christians, of whom Irenæus speaks, had thought lightly of the New Testament when it came to be propounded to them. We see at once in what manner sincere reverence for God's truth would lead them to treat the portions of His *written* word, as they were brought successively under their notice. If we will be impartial, we cannot hide it from ourselves, that His *unwritten* word, if it can be any how authenticated, must necessarily demand the same reverence from us; and for exactly the same reason: *because it is His word.*

But, further: the fact is clearly demonstrable from Scripture, that as long as the canon of the New Testament was incomplete, the unwritten system served as a test even for the Apostles' own writings. Nothing was to be read, as canonical, except it agreed with the faith delivered once for all to the first generation of the saints. The directions of St. Paul on this subject are perfectly clear, and without reserve. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema." And St. John, in his Epistles, strikes continually on the same chord. His language sounds like an emphatical protest against any suspicion of novelty or originality in his teaching. "Brethren, I write no new commandment

unto you, but the old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye heard from the beginning." He writes to them as to persons knowing the truth; knowing all things; not needing that any man teach them: He forbids their acquiescing without trial in any pretensions to spiritual gifts: he would have the spirits tried, whether they be of God, whatever their claim to be confirmed even by miracle; and the test or touchstone which he recommends is, agreement with the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation. "Every spirit that confesseth that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh, is of GOD; and every spirit that confesseth not that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh, is not of GOD¹." And his second Epistle speaks just the same language: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of CHRIST, hath not GOD; he that abideth in the doctrine of CHRIST, he hath both the FATHER and the SON²."

I do not see how we can be wrong in inferring, from these and similar passages, that the faith once for all delivered to the saints, in other words, Apostolical Tradition, was divinely appointed in the Church as the touchstone of canonical Scripture itself. No writing, however plausible the appearance of its having come from the Apostles, was to be accepted as theirs, if it taught any other

¹ S. John ii. 7. 20, 21. 27; iv. 1. 3.

² 2 S. John 9.

doctrine than what they at first delivered : rather both it and its writers were to be anathema.

This use of apostolical tradition may well correct the presumptuous irreverence of disparaging the Fathers under plea of magnifying Scripture. Here is a tradition so highly honoured by the Almighty Founder and Guide of the Church, as to be made the standard and rule of His own divine Scriptures. The very writings of the Apostles were to be first tried by it, before they could be incorporated into the canon. Thus the Scriptures themselves, as it were, do homage to the tradition of the Apostles ; the despisers, therefore, of that tradition take part, inadvertently or profanely, with the despisers of the Scripture itself¹.

On the other hand, it is no less evident that Scripture, being once ascertained, became in its turn a test for every thing claiming to be of Apostolical Tradition. But on this part of the subject there is the less occasion to dwell, it being, I suppose, allowed on all hands. Only it may be well to notice a distinction not always sufficiently kept in view by modern writers on the rule of faith ; viz. that whereas Scripture was from the beginning appealed to, of course, as a test of *positive* truth, it could only then be appealed to

¹ It is assumed in this paragraph, that where Scripture is silent, or ambiguous, consent of the Fathers is a probable index of Apostolical tradition. See below, p. 31—42.

negatively, i. e. its silence could then only be quoted as excluding any point from the list of truths necessary to salvation, when itself had attained a certain degree of completeness. And this perhaps may be one reason why the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is nowhere expressly affirmed in Scripture itself¹. The character which our Article justly assigns to the Bible, of “so containing all things necessary to salvation, that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation :”—this character the Bible could not, from the very force of the terms, acquire, until a sufficient portion of its contents had appeared, to include in one place or another every one of such fundamentals. Nor are we sure of this condition having been fulfilled until the appearance of St. John’s Gospel and first Epistle, the latest, probably, of those canonical Scriptures of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. This consideration may serve to account for the comparative rareness of quotations from the New Testament in the writings of the first century ; in the Epistle of St. Clement, for instance, who, while he produces in almost every paragraph some testimony

¹ See note (E) in Appendix.

from the Jewish Scriptures, has only three or four references to the New Testament: where such might be expected, he rather uses to remind men of "the depths of divine knowledge, which they had looked into¹;" of "the immortal knowledge, whereof they had tasted²;" and of the apostolical examples which they had seen. Whereas the writers of the following age, Irenæus, Tertullian, and the rest, add to the argument from tradition, on which in itself they lay as much stress as St. Clement, authorities and arguments from the New Testament, much in the manner of controversialists of our own time.

From all this I gather, that in the interval between Clement and Ignatius on the one hand, Irenæus and Tertullian on the other, the canon of the New Testament had first become fixed and notorious, and then the fact had been observed, which is stated in our Article: That every fundamental point of doctrine is contained in the unquestioned books of that canon, taken along with the Hebrew Scriptures. And this observation, being once made, would of course immediately suggest that golden rule, not of the Anglican only, but of the Catholic Church; That nothing is to be insisted on as a point of faith necessary to salvation, but what is contained in,

or may be proved by, canonical Scripture. At any rate it is unquestionable that by the time of Irenæus, *i. e.* towards the end of the second century, the fact had been universally recognized, and the maxim thoroughly grounded and incorporated into the system of the Catholic Church ¹.

Reserving thus the claim of Scripture to be sole and paramount as a rule of faith, we may now, I think, venture to assume, from the nature of the case, the incidental testimony of Scripture, and the direct assertions of the Fathers, that it was an unwritten system which the holy writers spoke of, when they so earnestly recommended the deposit, the commandment, the word heard from the beginning, to the reverential care both of pastors and of all Christian people.

Will it be said, "This is no concern of ours; it may be true in fact, but it yields no practical result; the traditionary system, whatever it was, having long ago passed away, except so far as it has been preserved in inspired writings?" This may be stated, and often is so, but can hardly be proved.

For in the first place, as long as it is only doubtful whether any statement or precept is part of the Apostolic system or no, so long a mind imbued with true devotion will treat that state-

¹ See Appendix, Note (F).

ment or precept with reverence, will not rudely reject or scorn it, lest he refuse to entertain an angel unawares. So long, the mere fact of its not being contained in Scripture cannot be felt as a justification for casting it aside, any more than we should venture to disparage it on account of its not being revealed in any particular *book* of Scripture, which we might happen to value above the rest. Although not in Scripture, it may yet be a part of *their* rule, concerning whom the SON of GOD has declared, "He that heareth you, heareth ME ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth ME."

But in truth it may be proved to the satisfaction of any reasonable mind, that not a few fragments yet remain, very precious and sacred fragments, of the unwritten teaching of the first age of the Church. The paramount authority, for example, of the successors of the Apostles in Church government ; the threefold order established from the beginning ; the virtue of the blessed Eucharist as a commemorative sacrifice ; infant Baptism ; and above all, the Catholic doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity, as contained in the Nicene Creed. All these, however surely confirmed from Scripture, are yet ascertainable parts of the primitive, unwritten system, of which we yet enjoy the benefit. If any one ask, how we ascertain them ; we answer, by application of the well-known rule, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* : Anti-

quity, Universality, Catholicity : tests similar to those which jurists are used to apply to the common or unwritten laws of any realm. If a maxim or custom can be traced back to a time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary ; if it pervade all the different courts, established in different provinces for the administration of justice ; and, thirdly, if it be generally acknowledged in such sort, that contrary decisions have been disallowed and held invalid : then, whatever the exceptions to it may be, it is presumed to be part and parcel of our common law. On principles exactly analogous, the Church practices and rules above mentioned, and several others, ought, we contend, apart from all Scripture evidence, to be received as traditionary or common laws ecclesiastical. They who contend that the very notion of such tradition is a mere dream and extravagance ; who plead against it the uncertainty of history, the loss or probable corruption of records, the exceptions, deviations, interruptions which have occurred through the temporary prevalence of tyranny, heresy, or schism ; must, if they would be consistent, deny the validity of the most important portion of the laws of this, and of most other old countries.

It is not, therefore antecedently impossible that a system of tradition, subsidiary to the Scriptures, might yet exist in the commonwealth or city of

GOD. The rest is matter of investigation in each case, whether any given rule, interpretation, or custom, be traditionary in the required sense. But it will not be going too far into particulars, and may help to the understanding and application of the whole argument, if I point out three distinct fields of Christian knowledge, in neither of which can we advance satisfactorily or safely without constant appeal to tradition, such as has been described.

The first is, the *System and Arrangement of fundamental Articles*, so far as they have come down to us systematic and arranged. We, that is all of the Anglican Church who have had any regular training in theology, are so early taught to trace the Creed in the Scriptures, and to refer at once certain portions of both Testaments to certain high mysteries of the Catholic faith, that it commonly appears to ourselves as though we had learned those mysteries directly from the Scriptures. But there are few, surely, who on careful recollection would not be compelled to acknowledge that the Creed, or some corresponding catechetical instruction, had prepossessed them with these truths, before ever they thought of proving them from Holy Writ. I need hardly remind you of the unquestioned historical fact, that the very Nicene Creed itself, to which perhaps of all *formulæ* we are most indebted for our

sound belief in the proper divinity of the SON of God—even this Creed had its origin, not from Scripture, but from tradition. The three hundred Bishops who joined in its promulgation did not profess to have collected it out of the Bible, but simply to express the faith which each of them had found in the Church which he represented, received by tradition from the Apostles¹. Nor is this any disparagement to Scripture, nor need it excite any alarm for the great fundamental verity itself, which the Creed was meant to assert; any more than it would disparage the works of God, or shake the foundation of our faith in natural religion, were one to affirm that the power and Godhead of the Creator, although unquestionably proveable from the things which are made, would yet have remained unknown to the mass of mankind, but for primitive tradition, or subsequent revelation of it.

The second great subject, on which most of us are unconsciously indebted to the ancient Catholic tradition, is the *Interpretation of Scripture*, especially those parts of it which less obviously relate to the mysteries of the Gospel. Catholic tradition bears upon Scripture interpretation, not only indirectly, by supplying, as just now stated, certain great landmarks of apostolical doctrine, conform-

¹ See Appendix, Note (G).

ably to which the written statements are all to be interpreted ; but also, in numerous cases, directly ; setting the Church's seal, as it were, upon one among many possible expositions of particular passages. For example : how else could we know, with tolerable certainty, that Melchizedek's feast is a type of the blessed eucharist ¹ ? or that the book of Canticles is an allegory, representing the mystical union betwixt CHRIST and his Church ² ? or that Wisdom, in the book of Proverbs, is a Name of the second Person in the Most Holy Trinity ³ ? All which interpretations, the moment they are heard, approve themselves to an unprejudiced mind, and must in all likelihood have come spontaneously into many readers' thoughts. But it may be questioned whether we could ever

¹ For this, see S. Cyprian, Ep. 63, p. 149, ed. Fell ; S. Augustin, de Civ. Dei, xviii, 20 ; S. Jerome, Ep. ad Marcellam, t. i. p. 123, ed. Frob. Basil. These with the distinct acknowledgment in the ancient Roman Liturgy, may perhaps be considered sufficient to represent the sense of the Western Churches. Among the Greeks, S. Chrysostom (on Gen. xiv.) clearly implies the same construction. But the reserve maintained by them on all liturgical subjects may account for their comparative silence on this point, even supposing them to have received the same interpretation.

² In this I believe all the Fathers who quote that divine Book (and most of them do so often) are agreed.

³ The disputes on the text, Proverbs viii. 22, at the Nicene Council, are sufficient to prove agreement on this point. It is well known that the Arians alleged it, as it stands in the Septuagint, (ὁ Κύριος ἔκτισέ με.) as a proof of the SON's inferiority. The Catholics never disputed the application of the text to our LORD, but denied the deduction from it.

have arrived at more than a plausible conjecture regarding them, but for the constant agreement of the early Church, taking notice every where, in these and the like instances, of the manner in which the Old Testament was divinely accommodated to the wonders of CHRIST'S religion.

The third great field of apostolical tradition lies among *practical* matters, the *Discipline, Formularies, and Rites* of the Church of CHRIST: in regard of which, reason tells us that the Church Apostolical must here have had *some* method and system; yet it is evident to the very eye that the New Testament exhibits no such system in form, but only fragments and other indications of one in full operation at the time, and well known to those for whom the Apostles were writing. These fragments being found to coincide with similar but more copious indications in later Church records; consideration also being had of the religious reverence wherewith in those ages every thing primitive was regarded, and of the charitable jealousy of the Churches, watching each other for the purpose of remonstrating against unwarrantable deviations; we need not fear to accept in its fulness, on all such matters, the well-known rule of St. Augustin, which I give in the words of Hooker¹: "Whatsoever positive order the whole

¹ E. P. vii. v 3, from Aug. Ep. 108, t. ii. 124.

Church every where doth observe, the same it must needs have received from the very Apostles themselves ; unless, perhaps, some general council were the authors of it." In this kind no one at all versed in Church history can be at a loss for examples of the benefit which the present Church derives from the chain of primitive tradition. Without its aid, humanly speaking, I do not see how we could now retain either real inward communion with our LORD through his Apostles, or the very outward face of God's Church and kingdom among us. Not to dwell on disputable cases : how, but by the tradition and practice of the early Church, can we demonstrate the observance of Sunday as the holiest day, or the permanent separation of the clergy from the people as a distinct order ? or where, except in the primitive Liturgies, a main branch of that tradition, can we find assurance that in the Holy Eucharist we consecrate as the Apostles did, and, consequently, that the cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of CHRIST, and the bread which we break the communion of the body of CHRIST ¹ ?

¹ Of course, in points of this kind, persons are at liberty, if they will, to content themselves with the common remark, 'Some order ' must have been adopted, and the Church had a right to adopt which ' she pleased.' It is among the privileges reserved for serious inquiring piety to discern an express will of God, as well in these ecclesiastical laws, as in others more immediately scriptural.

Whether, then, we look to Discipline, to Interpretation, or to Doctrine, every way we see reason to be thankful for many fragments of apostolical practice and teaching, most needful to guide us in the right use of Holy Scripture.

So it is, however, that either from impatience of authority, or dislike of trouble, or excessive dread of Romish error, tradition has become to most of us an unpalatable word, and we love not to allow that in any sense we rest our faith and practice upon it. And, as commonly happens when the mind is first made up, and reasons are to be found afterwards, objections the most contradictory are brought to justify this our determined disregard of antiquity. Sometimes it is urged that the matters involved are so many, so intricate and various, and demand such minute research, that it is out of the question bringing them within the reach of the great body of the clergy, however learned; sometimes, on the contrary, it is maintained, that the points agreed on in the whole ancient Church are obviously so few, there have been such constant discussions and waverings of opinion, that after all there is no such thing as primitive Catholic tradition; what is called such being merely the register of the dictates of that which has proved, on the whole, the strongest and most fashionable party in the

Church¹. The one statement makes the field so wide, that it is impossible not to lose one's way in it; the other so contracted, that occupying it is no advantage. It is obvious that both objections cannot stand together; and, as might be expected, the truth lies between the two. On the one hand, we are not to imagine that every usage which has prevailed in any part of the Church, every opinion which has been upheld even among orthodox Fathers, claims to have been part of the system of the Apostles. On the other hand, we cannot surely deny such claim to those rules, in which *all* primitive Councils are uniform, those rites and formularies which are found in *all* primitive Liturgies, and those interpretations and principles of interpretation in which *all* orthodox Fathers agree; more especially when they produce them as undoubted and authoritative. Now the genuine canons of the primitive Councils, and the genuine fragments of the primitive Liturgies, are reducible into a small space; even although we go so low down in both as the division of the Eastern and Western Churches, including the six first Councils general, and excluding image-worship and similar corruptions by authority. As far, therefore, as the Councils and Liturgies are concerned, tracing

¹ See Note (H) in Appendix.

the remnant of apostolical tradition need not prove such a very overwhelming task. To establish consent among the Fathers is, doubtless, a far more laborious process; easiest, however, where it is most desirable, *viz.* in the great points of faith and worship, as recurring continually, and implied in all other discussions. What remains is chiefly interpretation of Scripture; a precious, inexhaustible mine of primitive knowledge, to such as have the zeal to explore it, but not essential to the fixing of the main outlines. Leaving out, for the present, all such incidental discussions, and confining our view to that which touches the foundation, we shall find that the matters are neither few nor unimportant, which are settled by traditionary evidence within reach of common students. Were they much fewer than they are, and less important, still, as unquestionable relics of the Apostles, a devout and thoughtful mind would prize them for their authors' sake, and for the sake of the lost treasure, whereof they are portions. To forget and disparage them, would be a hard and unnatural thing, like coldly refusing due reverence to the dead. As it is, by the gracious Providence of Almighty God, the points of Catholic consent known by tradition constitute the knots and ties of the whole system; being such as these: the canon of Scripture, the full doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, the oblation and

consecration of the Eucharist, the apostolical Succession ; truths and orders soon enumerated, but such as to extend in vital efficacy through every part of the great scheme of the Church. What, then, if the Church in our time, for the sins of Christians, should have lost more or less of that good thing, the perfect apostolical body of government, doctrine, and sacramental grace, committed to St. Paul first, and by him to Timothy ? It is not the less our duty, and by God's grace we will regard it as our high privilege, to keep unwearied watch over what remains, and to preserve it, by the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth in us.

3. These concluding words, while they supply an additional reason for extreme jealousy of our precious apostolical relics, open to us the appointed way of guarding what remains, and if one might be so happy, of recovering more : a way not our own, but strictly and properly supernatural. And thus we are conducted to the final point of our enquiry, Whether we, the existing Ministers of the Church, have the same grace dwelling in us, by which Timothy was exhorted to maintain his trust.

Now certainly the obvious meaning of the text is, that the treasure of sound doctrine was to be guarded by the grace of the apostolical succession. For St. Paul speaks of the HOLY GHOST dwelling

in us; *i. e.* in himself and Timothy : and how it had passed from him to Timothy had been expressed a few verses before ; “ I will that thou stir up the grace of GOD which is in thee by the imposition of my hands.” The Church of England, you will remember, supplies full warrant for this interpretation ; by directing the same phrase to be solemnly repeated at the consecration of every Bishop : “ Remember that thou stir up the grace of GOD *which is given thee by this imposition of our hands* ;” and also where, in ordaining a Bishop or Presbyter, the solemn words are spoken, “ Receive the HOLY GHOST.” Our Church, therefore, does not teach us to consider the HOLY GHOST dwelling in St. Paul and Timothy as properly miraculous, a gift of extraordinary grace ; but as their portion of that SPIRIT which was to be poured out on all Apostles, and successors of the Apostles, for ever. It was not what is commonly called miraculous ; yet it was altogether supernatural. For no natural or acquired virtue or talent, though it might be called the *gift* of the HOLY GHOST, would ever be designated as the HOLY GHOST himself abiding in a man. Neither was it the preventing or assisting grace, common to all Christian persons ; for it was given to Timothy in particular by imposition of St. Paul’s hands. It could only be, what the Church interprets it, apostolical or episcopal grace.

Apostolical, then, or episcopal grace is by God's ordinance the guardian of sound doctrine; the SPIRIT abiding in Timothy is to watch incessantly the deposit or trust of divine truth left in his charge: and where the one, the succession, fails, there, as this verse would lead us to expect, and as all Church history proves, the other, the truth of doctrine, is immediately in imminent jeopardy.

Here, then, we seem to have arrived at one cardinal point at least, whereby we may shape our course in times and emergencies more than usually perplexing. We are to look before all things to the integrity of the good deposit, the orthodox faith, the Creed of the Apostolical Church, guaranteed to us by Holy Scripture, and by consent of pure antiquity. Present opportunities of doing good; external quietness, peace, and order; a good understanding with the temporal and civil power; the love and co-operation of those committed to our charge;—these, and all other pastoral consolations, must be given up, though it be with a heavy heart, rather than we should yield one jot or one tittle of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

And whereas the dangers to that faith vary according to the differences of times, interests, and opinions; and sometimes the scriptural, sometimes the traditionary safe-guards of it appear to

be more immediately threatened; both must be watched with jealous and impartial care, since comparative neglect of either is sure to be attended with ill consequences to both. Thus the reverence of the Latin Church for tradition, being applied unscrupulously, and without the necessary check from Scripture, to opinions and practices of a date comparatively recent, has led a large portion of Christendom to disuse and contempt, not of Scripture only, but of that real and sure tradition, which they might and ought to have religiously depended upon. On the other hand, is there not reason to fear that the Holy Scriptures themselves are fast losing reverence, through the resolute defiance of tradition, which some affect, in conformity, as they suppose, with the maxim, that the Bible only is the religion of Protestants? Surely it is no rare nor unnatural result, if such as are trained to this principle, being left, as some one has said, alone with their Bibles¹, use their supposed liberty of interpretation, first in explaining away the mysterious meaning, and afterwards in lowering or evading the supernatural authority, of the very Scriptures which at first they deferred to exclusively. And no wonder; since among the traditionary truths which they are taught to undervalue is the canon of Scripture itself, and the principle also, the fundamental articles of

¹ Hooker, E. P. Pref. vii. 7.

belief, must be sought for in Scripture. In short, the sacred building is so divinely, though invisibly cemented, that for aught we know it is impossible to remove any portion, either of scriptural or traditional truth, without weakening the whole arch. We, to whom the whole is committed, under the most solemn of all pledges, and with the actual gift of the all-sufficient SPIRIT to aid us in redeeming that pledge; let us, above all things, beware of the presumption of selecting for ourselves among the truths and laws of the Most High, *which* we will retain, and *which* we may venture to dispense with.

In the next place, let us beware of Novelty: novelty, I mean, as compared with the apostolic age; not the mere appearance of novelty as compared with the current notions of our time. For it is self-evident that if in any age or country any portion of apostolical truth be lost, whenever it is revived it must for the time look new; and its maintainers will have to contend with the prejudice which constantly waits on the disturbers of things established. Not novelty, therefore, relative to us, but novelty relative to the primitive and original standard, is the thing above all to be deprecated in the whole of theology, by whatever plausible air of originality, ingenuity, completeness, it may seem to recommend itself.

Observe under what a fearful penalty, in a

warning parallel to that of the text, St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, discourages every intrusion of speculative doctrine. The apostacy, he tells them, will come; the wicked one shall be revealed, actuated by Satan, to deceive them that perish; "on whom God will send strong delusion, "that they may believe a lie." And then he proceeds, "Wherefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold "the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." Is not this equivalent to saying, that whoever is studious of novelty in religion is in a way to take part with Antichrist; that the only security against him, and the spirit which prepares the way for him, is to hold the apostolical doctrine, whether taught in word or in writing; and to exclude all additions, however tempting to human ingenuity and love of system, however acutely they may appear to be reasoned out, and to fall in with allowed principles?

Had this rule been faithfully kept, it would have preserved the Church just as effectually from transubstantiation on the one hand, as from the denial of CHRIST'S real presence on the other hand. The two errors in the original are but rationalism in different forms; endeavours to explain away, and bring nearer to the human intellect, that which had been left thoroughly mysterious both by Scripture and tradition. They would both turn the attention of men from the real life-giving

miracle to mere metaphysical or grammatical subtleties, such as our fathers never knew.

Observe, again, the phraseology of the Apostle, how it is formed throughout upon the supposition that in the substance of the faith there is no such thing as improvement, discovery, evolution of new truths; none of those processes, which are the pride of human reason and knowledge, find any place here. Here the one thing needful is to “*retain* the mystery of the faith;” to “*abide* in “the good instruction whereto we have already “attained;” to “teach no *other* doctrine;” to be on our guard against those who resist the truth under pretence of “proceeding further,” assured that such, although they seem to be “ever learning,” shall never be able to “come to the knowledge of the truth;” they will “*proceed*” indeed, but it will be from bad to worse¹. All these cautions, and others no less fearful, the HOLY SPIRIT has left for our admonition, directed not against any positive wrong opinion, but in general against the fatal error of treating theology like any human science, as a subject in which every succeeding age might be expected to advance on the former².

Nor is the warning less important, nor the application to our times less certain, where

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 9; iv. 6; i. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 7. 9. 13. Προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον, πλανῶντες καὶ πλανώμενοι.

² See Appendix, Note (1).

Timothy is enjoined¹ to “keep that committed to “his charge, turning away from profane, empty “verbal discussions, and oppositions of knowledge “falsely so called.” The allusion was probably in the first instance to the low-minded empirical system of the Gnostics. But the words are not much less appropriate to that which may be called the *Nominalism* of our days; I mean the habit of resolving the high mysteries of the faith into mere circumstances of language, methods of speaking adapted to our weak understanding, but with no real counterpart in the nature of things. Whoever takes this line must needs hold the tradition of antiquity cheap, since it is based altogether on the supposition which he rejects as unphilosophical. Thus slighting tradition, and explaining away Scripture, there is no saying what pernicious heresy such a theorist may not fall into, if not happily guarded against himself by feelings and prejudices more reasonable than all his reasoning. Meantime the warning of Scripture is express: that they who “profess” such things may be expected to “err concerning the faith.” And it is plain that if at any time either the high places of the Church, or the schools of theological knowledge, should be left in such keeping, the guardians of the good deposit would be bound to

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

direct especial attention that way, and not permit things to pass away, as in a dream, before men are aware.

This leads directly to the recollection of a third danger, to which the Church seems especially exposed at this moment; I mean, that which is commonly entitled *Erastianism*; the Church betraying to the civil power more or less of the good deposit, which our LORD had put exclusively into her hands. This is a form of compromise with the world, for which no occasion was given by the circumstances of the Apostles: a trial peculiar to times like ours, when the governors of the world profess to have become the servants of our LORD and of His CHRIST. We cannot therefore look in the New Testament for literal instruction how to behave with regard to this delicate and dangerous part of our duty. The Gospel affording no express rules or precedents, we are thrown first upon the many analogous cases which the inspired records of the Jewish history supply; and then upon the conduct and determinations of the Catholic Church, in those centuries of her establishment during which the primitive system existed in something like integrity, to guide her demeanour in her altered condition. Yet, undoubtedly, the general rule, Keep the deposit, affects our relations to the civil authorities more immediately than persons unversed in church

matters might imagine. If we are to understand by "the deposit," the faith once for all committed to Christians; and if the apostolical succession be the appointed guard of that faith; and if the charter of the succession, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," convey the power of Church government as well as that of administering sacraments; then every undue sacrifice of the power of Church government to any earthly power is an infringement of the charter, and renders the deposit of the faith less secure. For the sake, therefore, of the very foundation of sound doctrine, and not only for the sake of peace and order in the Church, ecclesiastical government, as well as the custody of sacraments, should be jealously reserved in those hands to which CHRIST originally entrusted it. Nor do I see how it can be less than a sacred duty, however painful, and to human eyes unavailing, to protest, if we can do no more, against unauthorized intrusions on Church government, as every one will readily allow we ought to protest against unauthorized administration of sacraments ¹.

Such being the object for which we are set in defence, and such the enemies with whom we have to contend; such also the heavenly assist-

¹ See note (K) in Appendix.

ant, dwelling in us and fighting on our side ; it cannot be hard to perceive with what dispositions we ought to address ourselves to that holy warfare. It will not do to shrink from responsibility, or to be over scrupulous in calculating immediate results. Once let us be reasonably assured that we are in the way of our duty, really keeping the good deposit ; and then, to use the words of the Prophet, we may “ set our faces like a flint, and need not be ashamed.” Then, as often as misgivings and alarms come over us, we must “ stir up the grace of God which is in us by imposition of apostolic hands.” For “ God hath not given us a SPIRIT of cowardice¹, but of power, and of love, and of brotherly correction and reproof² ;” a SPIRIT that brings with Him an invisible but real *power*, to open and shut the kingdom of heaven in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST ; a SPIRIT of never-failing *love* and *charity* to men’s souls, to guide us in the exercise of that more than human power ; and, lastly, a SPIRIT of kind and fatherly, yet, if need be, uncompromising and fearless *rebuke*.

Let us be only true to our sacred trust : let us put everything else by for the sake of handing down the whole counsel of God, our good deposit, entire as we received it : and who knows but we

¹ Δειλίας.

² Σωφρονισμοῦ.

may by God's mercy be made instrumental in saving the English church from ruin not unlike that which has fallen on Ephesus, Smyrna, or Sardis? At any rate, the Church Catholic, in one country or another, we are sure, will survive and triumph. As of old she has stood before kings and governors, and it turned to her for a testimony, so now blessed are they whom divine Providence shall choose and enable worthily to support her cause against popular delusion and tyranny. We, indeed, as Priests of the second order, are but under-labourers in that most holy cause. Yet the least and lowest among us may look for his share of the blessing, as he has undoubtedly his share of the burthen and of the peril. Is there not a hope, that by resolute self-denial and strict and calm fidelity to our ordination vows, we may not only aid in preserving that which remains, but also may help to revive in some measure, in this or some other portion of the Christian world, more of the system and spirit of the apostolical age? New truths, in the proper sense of the word, we neither can nor wish to arrive at. But the monuments of antiquity may disclose to our devout perusal much that will be to this age new, because it has been mislaid or forgotten; and we may attain to a light and clearness, which we now dream not of, in our comprehension of the faith and discipline of CHRIST. We may

succeed beyond what humanly appears possible in rekindling a primitive zeal among those who shall be committed to our charge. Even as Abraham, neglecting all earthly objects, “taught his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment;” and one part of his reward was, that “God would not hide from Abraham the thing which he did¹;” another, that he was made the glorious and favoured instrument for transmitting divine truth through a fallen and corrupt age.

¹ Gen. xviii. 17—19.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A, p. 11.

Philip. i. 15—18. The construction here adopted varies a little from that commonly received. It may be as well, therefore, briefly to state the exact import of it, and the grounds on which it is preferred. It supposes that the words, *κηρύσσειν* and *καταγγέλλειν*, are not used here in any technical or official sense, which might answer to the English word *preaching*, taken as in our version of the Bible, but that they represent the occasional though providential result of St. Paul's imprisonment having been made the subject of conversation at Rome. Some spoke of it as faithful Christians; others the Judaizers more especially, as jealous enemies of Christianity: both became in a certain sense heralds of CHRIST, the one sincerely and intentionally speaking the word, as he says just above, the more boldly for his bonds; the other occasionally, without any purpose of their own. Clearly the words will bear this construction. And the ancient interpreters unite in denying the applicability of St. Paul's expressions to heretical teaching. So Tertullian, adv.

Marcion, lib. v. c. 20, having quoted the passage from St. Paul, remarks, that “this was the natural place for excepting to the substance of the preaching complained of, had any variation of that kind been the cause of this great diversity of feeling. But the Apostle states the irregularity to exist in the motives and tempers of men only, not in their standards of mysterious doctrine. His manner of speaking shows that with whatever purpose they preached, it was one GOD whom they preached, and one CHRIST. ‘Therefore,’ he adds, ‘it is nothing to me, whether in pretence or in truth CHRIST be preached;’ because it was still the same who was preached, whether with pretended or with real faithfulness. It was in respect of their good faith in preaching that he used the phrase ‘*in truth*,’ not in respect of the rule of doctrine itself, which they preached. For the rule was all the time one; but some had genuine, *i. e.* simple good faith in delivering it; others were too full of subtilties.” Again, it appears that in St. Cyprian’s time, some had argued from this passage of St. Paul in favour of allowing heretical baptism. St. Cyprian’s reply is, “He was not speaking of heretics, nor of their baptism. We cannot show that he has here laid down any rule pertaining thereto. He was speaking of Christians walking, some disorderly, and contrary to Church discipline; some, through fear of GOD, preserving evangelical verity . . . Now, it is one thing for those within the Church to speak in the name of CHRIST; another thing for those without (*i. e.* heretics) to baptize in the name of CHRIST.” Ep. ad Jubaian. p. 204, ed. Fell. comp. Firmilian, ad Cyprian. p. 226. See also S. Chrys. *in loco*, who agrees with the preceding Fathers in not interpreting the passage of heretics, but is more express than they in supposing, that it was some sort of formal preaching of which St.

Paul complains. It seems, however, a hard supposition, that any should have literally preached the truth of CHRIST, and exposed themselves to persecution, for the sake of exasperating the emperor against St. Paul. In this therefore, it may be excusable to depart from St. Chrysostom, and rather to understand κηρύσσειν and καταγγέλλειν, when applied to the adversaries, in a secondary sense, of the pains taken by them to spread the report of the Apostle's imprisonment, which they considered a check and discredit to the Gospel.

NOTE B, p. 15.

The validity of this conjecture may be best estimated by simply comparing the passage in the original with the preceding and subsequent verses:—

Ἔμην γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοὶ, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους.

Ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ΘΕΟΥ,

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ὧν ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς,

ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν αὐτοῦ ἔλεον ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς,

διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας, καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως ΠΝΕΥ-
ΜΑΤΟΣ ἉΓΙΟΥ,

οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως, διὰ ἸΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ
τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν·

ἵνα, δικαιοθέτες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι,

κληρονόμοι γενώμεθα κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.

Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαί σε διαβεβαιούσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσι καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες τῷ ΘΕΩ.

NOTE C, p. 17.

The only other notion of the *παρακαταθήκη*, or apostolical deposit, which can at all approve itself to one versed in Scripture language, is that which would explain it of *persons* rather than of *doctrines*; the flock which was given him, the souls committed to his charge: according to the use of the word in the Acts of the Apostles: "They *commended* their new converts to the LORD on whom they had believed;" and St. Paul "*commended* the Ephesian elders to GOD and the word of his grace."

But, besides the reasons above given for interpreting the place rather of doctrine, it may be asked whether the very form of expression, Keep the deposit, is such as would have been probably adopted, had pastoral duties been only or chiefly intended. It seems to cast upon the person so admonished rather too much of absolute responsibility, considering that, after all, the success of the pastoral care must depend chiefly on those who are the objects of it. In short, it is a mode of interpreting too much in unison with the overstrained exaggerated demands of our day; in which it has become a general custom to speak as if every thing depended on the personal qualities of the clergy; to blame them altogether for failure, and, in consequence, to attribute to them over much of the blessings, with which the ALMIGHTY from time to time may be pleased to visit His Church.

NOTE D, p. 24.

Iren. adv. Hær. iii. 4. "Non oportet adhuc quærere apud alios veritatem, quam facile est ab Ecclesia sumere; cum Apostoli, quasi in depositorium dives, plenissime in

eam contulerint omnia quæ sint veritatis : uti omnis, quicumque velit, sumat ex ea potum vitæ. Hæc est enim vitæ introitus ; omnes autem reliqui fures sunt et latrones Quid autem si neque Apostoli quidem Scripturas reliquissent nobis ? Nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditionis, quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant Ecclesias ? Cui ordinationi assentiunt multæ gentes Barbarorum, eorum qui in CHRISTUM credunt, sine charta vel atramento scriptam habentes per SPIRITUM in cordibus suis salutem, et veterem traditionem diligenter custodientes. . . . Hanc fidem qui sine literis crediderunt, quantum ad sermonem nostrum, barbari sunt ; quantum autem ad sententiam, et consuetudinem, et conversationem, propter fidem perquam sapientissimi sunt, et placent Deo, conversantes in omni iustitia et castitate et sapientia. Quibus si aliquis annunciarit ea quæ ab hæreticis adinventata sunt, proprio sermone eorum colloquens, statim concludentes aures, longo longius fugient, ne audire quidem sustinentes blasphemum colloquium.”

NOTE E, p. 29.

This is not said without recollection of such texts as St. John v. 49 ; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. But it is plain that both these passages speak of the *Scriptures of the Old Testament only* ; and therefore, if understood exclusively, prove too much. The latter, indeed, adds a general remark on the use of *all* Scripture ; that being, as it is, all alike divinely inspired, every part of it has its use, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; and must help to the perfection and entire furnishing of the man of God unto all good works. But St. Paul does not there affirm that all truths

necessary to salvation are contained in Scripture, any more than he affirms all to be contained in each separate portion of Scripture.

These being the passages commonly adduced to prove by Scripture the sufficiency of Scripture, and being evidently inadequate to the purpose, we cannot be very wrong in rather referring to Tradition, as for the Sacred Canon itself, so also for this rule concerning it; That it contains or implies whatever points of faith are necessary to eternal salvation.

NOTE F, p. 31.

Not to travel at present beyond the writings of Irenæus himself, the following might be cited as passages clearly implying this doctrine. In b. ii. c. 46, he thus lays down the rule to be adopted in interpreting Scripture parables:—"A sound, and safe, and religious mind, and one really bent on truth:—whatsoever things God has left within our province, and subjected to our knowledge, those such a mind will diligently study to the uttermost, and in the same continually advance, by daily exercise rendering the acquisition of knowledge easy to itself. Now these things are, first, such as come under the cognizance of our sight; secondly, whatsoever things are openly and unambiguously uttered in the very words of the Divine Scriptures. And therefore the parables, or dark passages, ought always to be expounded consistently with those which are clear." Is it not plain that Irenæus is here dividing the grounds of human knowledge into two classes, the one of Sight and the other of Faith; and that his definition of the latter is, "such things as are openly and unambiguously uttered in the very words of Divine Scrip-

ture"? Presently after, he compares those who leave express Scripture for doubtful and fanciful theories of figurative language, to the foolish virgins, who "being freely and in plain terms invited to meet the bridegroom, lose their opportunity, and are shut out of the marriage feast, while they are seeking light from those who busy themselves in the dark with forced explanations of parables." Again, in the very passage above quoted, p. 24, where he speaks most highly of real apostolical tradition, he clearly intimates that the Scriptures are parallel to it in substance. The mere question, If we had not the Scriptures, must we not follow tradition? implies that, having the Scriptures, we have the substance of truths necessary to salvation, and so far depend not at all on tradition. The manner, again, in which Irenæus every where opposes the heretics to the Scriptures, evinces that they were constantly and unhesitatingly appealed to by the orthodox, as the foundation, without going further. E. g. lib. ii. c. 54. "These are not fitter guides than the Scriptures: nor does it become us, leaving the writings of the LORD and Moses, and the other prophets, heralds of the truth, to rest our faith on these, whose teaching has nothing sound, but is full of distraction and incoherency."

NOTE G, p. 35.

The following is the statement of St. Athanasius; de Decr. Nic. Synod. c. iii. : t. i. 210. ed. Bened.

Ὡς ἐφιλονείκουν ἀσεβοῦντες, καὶ θεομαχεῖν ἐπεχείρουν, τὰ μὲν λεγόμενα παρ' αὐτῶν ἀσεβείας ἦν μεστά· οἱ δὲ συνελθόντες ἐπίσκοποι· ἦσαν δὲ πλέον ἢ ἔλασσον τριακόσιοι· πρῶως καὶ φιλανθρώπως ἀπήτουν αὐτοὺς, περὶ ὧν

ἔλεγον διδόναι λόγον καὶ ἀποδείξεις εὐσεβεῖς. ὡς δὲ καὶ μόνου φθεγγόμενοι κατεγινώσκοντο, καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς διεμάχοντο, πολλὴν ὀρῶντες τῆς ἑαυτῶν αἰρέσεως τὴν ἀπορίαν, ἀχανεῖς μὲν ἔμενον οὗτοι, καὶ διὰ τῆς σιωπῆς ὁμολογοῦν τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ κακοδοξίᾳ αὐτῶν αἰσχύνην· οἱ τοίνυν ἐπίσκοποι λοιπὸν ἀνελόντες τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐπινοηθέντα ῥήματα, οὕτως ἐξέθεντο κατ' αὐτῶν τὴν ὑγιαίνουσαν καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὴν πίστιν.

“The Arians being forward in their impiety, and taking the offensive, and uttering words full of ungodliness, the Bishops who had assembled, being in number three hundred, more or less, quietly asked of them to give some explanation and proof of their affirmations, consistent with piety. But when upon their own shewing they were convicted, and were at variance with each other, finding themselves much at a loss in maintaining their heresy, the result was, on the one part, silence, and an implied confession of shame for their perverse opinion; on the other, the Bishops rejected the expressions devised by them, and proceeded to enunciate against them the sound faith, *the faith of the Church from the beginning.*”

The orthodox therefore at Nice argued indeed largely from Scripture, but it was in refutation of the Arian subtilities, rather than for establishment of the Catholic faith. For the latter purpose, they were content to appeal to tradition.

NOTE H, p. 40.

Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, c. vii. p. 1. s. 56. “The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants. Whatever else they believe besides it, and the plain irrefragable indubitable consequences

of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion: but as matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe in themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this rock only. I see plainly, and with mine own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, *Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves, a consent of Fathers of one age against a consent of Fathers of another age, the Church of one age against the Church of another age; traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found. No tradition but only of Scripture can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only for any considering men to build upon.*" It is melancholy, but instructive, to reflect that the writer of these sentences is known to have been "sceptical, to say the least of it, on the highest points of faith." Clarendon's Life, i. 56. See Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works, i. 66, 67. Des Maizeaux, Life of Chillingworth, 55.

NOTE I, p. 48.

The sort of improvement which we are encouraged to hope for, is traced out by Vincentius Lirinensis, Commonitor. c. 22:—"O Timothee, O sacerdos, O tractor, O doctor, si te divinum munus idoneum fecerit, ingenio, exercitatione, doctrina, esto spiritalis tabernaculi

Bezaleel, pretiosas divini dogmatis gemmas exsculpe, fideliter coapta, adorna sapienter, adjice splendorem, gratiam, venustatem. Intelligatur te exponente illustrius quod ante obscurius credebatur. Per te posteritas intellectum gratuletur, quod ante vetustas non intellectum venerabatur. Eadem tamen quæ didicisti doce; ut cum dicas nove, non dicas nova." Compare Bp. Butler, Anal. part ii. c. iii. vol. ii. p. 249. Oxford, 1807.

NOTE K, p. 51.

This part of the argument can hardly be stated, under the present circumstances of our Church, without giving rise to the grave practical question, What is the line to be taken by those clergymen, who feel serious objections, in conscience and principle, to the course of ecclesiastical legislation now in progress: who consider our SAVIOUR'S charter to be violated by the admission of a body constituted as the British Parliament now is to legislate for the Church of CHRIST, especially without controul or authority from the Bishops synodically assembled? Under such persuasion, can we help regarding the laws so passed, or hereafter to be passed, as having in themselves no canonical force, and only then claiming the submission of CHRIST'S ministers and people, when enforced on us severally by command of our respective diocesans? Or can we avoid entertaining fears, that the whole may amount in GOD'S sight to the concurrence of the Church in a great national sin? All this, over and above the many grave exceptions which, as not a few of us think, may reasonably be alleged against the *details* of the proposed reform. Can it be wrong to take such opportunities as we have of respectfully recording our humble but

deliberate protest against proceedings, in our judgment so very objectionable ?

The present writer is well aware of the insignificancy of such expressions of individual opinion ; and also of the danger of appearing undutiful to those whom he is bound most on earth to honour and revere. But he has observed in several quarters a disposition to interpret the silence of the parochial clergy as implying approbation of the measures in question : and he fears that such supposed acquiescence may tend to neutralize our efforts on future occasions. These feelings, he hopes, may plead his excuse for being anxious to disavow on his own behalf, and as far as he may venture to do so, on behalf of the clergy in general, all responsibility on the subject. The principles, on which we might well be supposed averse to the course which has been adopted, were sufficiently manifested three years ago in our remonstrances against the Irish Church Bill. Whatever has been now done, for good or for evil, the praise or blame of it must belong entirely to our governors. Our part has been merely that of soldiers, laying down their arms at the command of their superior officers. Nor can it in fairness be so construed as to preclude us hereafter from asserting church principles, as often as we feel that our duty calls on us to do so.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

TRADITION is a word of so vague use, and so closely associated, in most men's minds, with a whole host of partialities and antipathies, that it were chimerical to think of escaping objections, though a person's view on the subject were much clearer and more accurate than the author of the preceding Sermon professes to have attained. This consideration ought *in limine* to check any thought of bitterness, such as is apt to spring up in a writer's mind, when he finds himself charged with opinions which he knows he never held, and believes he never expressed: and at the same time it may console him under the fear, which he must more or less experience, lest something incautious or negligent in his way of writing may have led to such misrepresentation, and so may have injured what he conscientiously believes to be a most important and sacred cause. As it is, he may perhaps be excused for waiving any detailed notice of the censures with which the sermon has been visited; not out of any disrespect to their authors, but under the sincere conviction, that the subsequent remarks, if duly followed up, will explain and justify, to

considerate persons, whatever may have appeared questionable in the original argument.

On a general view of what he has read and heard in opposition to the idea of Church Tradition here enforced, he finds matter, *first*, for serious protest on his own behalf, and, *secondly*, for serious caution to all who approach that subject.

I. 1. He is principally anxious to remove any impression which may exist of his wishing to recommend a new theory, a rule of faith devised for present occasions, by any particular school of divines, now or at any former time. On the contrary, he is persuaded that what he is endeavouring to inculcate is no other than the very rule of the Church of England, as distinguished on the one hand from Romish usurpation, on the other from rationalistic licentiousness. And in support of this persuasion he appeals to the collection of authorities concerning Tradition, from the standard English divines, under the title of *Catena Patrum*; which is subjoined to this reprint of the Sermon, by permission of the Editor of the *Tracts for the Times*. If he err in his estimate of the spirit of the English Church, it will appear, he trusts, by those papers, that at least his error was not of his own invention—that he has both high and ancient authority for it.

With this reference the topic of novelty might be dismissed; but there is one great name occurring in the *Catena*, to the benefit of which some may deny that the argument has a full right: and as there are appearances to the contrary, a few words may be allowed in explanation. The name meant is that of Bishop Jeremy Taylor; in one of whose latest sermons; a sermon addressed to his clergy during his episcopate, the following occurs among the rules for securing incorruption of doctrine:

“ Next to this analogy or proportion of faith, let the consent of the Catholic Church be your measure, so as by no means to prevaricate in any doctrine, in which all Christians always have consented. This will appear to be a necessary rule by and by ; but in the mean time I shall observe to you, that it will be the safer, because it cannot go far ; it can be instanced but in three things, in the *Creed*, in *ecclesiastical government*, and in external *forms of worship and liturgy*. The Catholic Church hath been too much and too soon divided : it hath been used as the man upon a hill used his heap of heads in a basket ; when he threw them down the hill, every head ran his own way, ‘ quot capita tot sententiæ ;’ and as soon as the spirit of truth was opposed by the spirit of error, the spirit of peace was disordered by the spirit of division ; and the SPIRIT of GOD hath overpowered us so far, that we are only fallen out about that, of which if we had been ignorant, we had not been much the worse ; but in things simply necessary, GOD hath preserved us still unbroken ; all nations and all ages recite the Creed, and all pray the Lord’s Prayer, and all pretend to walk by the rule of the Commandments, and all churches have ever kept the day of CHRIST’S resurrection or the LORD’S day holy ; and all churches have been governed by Bishops, and the rites of Christianity have been for ever administered by separate orders of men, and those men have been always set apart by prayer and the imposition of the Bishop’s hands ; and all Christians have been baptized, and all baptized persons were, or ought to be, and were taught that they should be, confirmed by the Bishop, and presidents of religion ; and for ever there were public forms of prayer, more or less, in all churches ; and all Christians that were to enter into holy wedlock were ever joined or blessed by the Bishop or the Priest : in these

things all Christians have ever consented, and *he that shall prophesy or expound Scripture to the prejudice of any of these things, hath no part in that article of his Creed ; he does not believe the holy Catholic Church, he hath no fellowship, no communion with the saints and servants of GOD*¹.”

In the *Dissuasive from Popery*, a work of the same date, he says, “The great use of the Fathers, especially of the first three hundred years, is to tell us what was first, to consign Scripture to us, to convey the creed, with simplicity and purity to preach CHRIST’S Gospel, to declare what is necessary and what not².” Again, in the *Ductor Dubitantium*, “There is yet one more use of Tradition, but it is in rituals, Such are, 1. The observation of the LORD’S day, solemnly once a year, and less solemnly once a week ; i. e. the feast of Easter, and the weekly Sunday ; 2. The government of the Church by Bishops, which is consigned to us by a tradition greater than some books of Scripture, and as great as that of the LORD’S day ; and that so notorious, that thunder is not more heard than this is seen in all the monuments of antiquity ; 3. Offices ecclesiastical to be said and done by ecclesiastical persons ; such as are, the public prayers of the Church, the consecration of the blessed Eucharist, the blessing of the married pairs and joining them in the holy and mysterious rite of marriage, the consecration of Bishops by Bishops only, &c. These three are the most universal and apostolical Traditions ; which, although they have also great grounds in Scripture, yet because the universal practice and doctrine of the Church of GOD in all ages and in all churches primitive is infinitely evident and notorious, less liable to

¹ Vol. vi. p. 520.

² Vol. x. p. 312.

exception, and an apt commentary upon the certain but less evident places of Scripture, therefore these may be placed under the protection of universal tradition; for they really have it beyond all exception¹.”

Passages of this kind (and many more might be adduced) would seem to show that when Bishop Taylor speaks in disparagement of tradition, he means only such as the Church of Rome avouches: tradition of the *substance* of doctrine, *independent of Scripture*, and *purporting to be of things necessary to salvation*. For the *form* of doctrine, i. e. for the *creed*, or selection of fundamental articles; for *ritual matters*; and for *Church government*, he accounts it not only useful, but (morally and practically speaking) necessary. And he repeatedly and distinctly assigns the reason for the different degree of authority which he attributes to it in the two cases; viz. that in practical matters it may be verified, but in doctrinal (with the exception of the creed) it cannot. If it could, his own statement is, it ought to be received on the same ground as the Scriptures, the distinction of written and spoken being but an accident².

Now in all this it will be difficult to show in what instance Bp. Taylor's doctrine varies from that of the preceding Sermon, except it be in these two particulars; which do

¹ xiii. 118.

² x. 418. “Tradition signified either preaching or writing, as it happened. When it signified preaching, it was only the first way of communicating the religion of JESUS CHRIST; and until the Scriptures were written, and consigned by the full testimony of the Apostles and apostolical churches respectively, they, in questions of religion, usually appealed to tradition.” Then quoting the passage of St. Irenæus, which is cited in the preceding sermon, he adds, “That which was true then, is also true now; for, if the Apostles had never written at all, we must have followed tradition; unless God had provided for us some better thing.” Comp. p. 385.

not, it is conceived, affect the main argument: first, that the Sermon mentions *Interpretation of Scripture* as another possible field of genuine tradition, besides those which Taylor has specified; and, secondly, that although Taylor, in a passage above cited, appears to make certain traditional practices absolutely necessary to church communion, yet in his *Ductor Dubitantium*, a work of an earlier date by a few years, he had followed up his mention of the same observances thus: "Whatever can descend to us and be observed in this channel, there is no sufficient reason to deny it to be apostolical; but then how far it can be obligatory to all ages and to all churches will be another consideration¹." On comparing the two statements, it may perhaps be thought that this great man, like his predecessor Hooker, as he grew older, became more convinced of the importance as well as genuineness of those portions of the Church system, which are most concerned in this controversy². And it may be observed, that any admission from him, apparently narrowing the terms of communion, comes to us with peculiar force; his tendency, as the *Liberty of Propheying* shows, being quite the other way;

¹ xiii. 139.

² "It is something in favour of Vincentius' rule, that it has been received, extolled, and acted upon, by such men as Ridley, Jewel, Grotius, Overal, Hammond, Beveridge, Bull, Hicks, Bramhall, Grabe, Cave, and our own Archbishop King; that it has been admitted expressly even by Chillingworth; and that it has been unreservedly acknowledged as a just and true guide, by Bishop Taylor, in one of his latest works, his Visitation Sermon at Connor; a tribute, this last, the more remarkable, because in his *Liberty of Propheying*, and in his *Ductor Dubitantium*, he had spoken less respectfully of the principle, and his remarkable change of language can be accounted for only by his having undergone a correspondent change of sentiment. He had seen, felt, and weighed every difficulty; the result of all was, a deliberate persuasion that Vincentius was right, and that he himself had been wrong." Bishop Jebb, *Letter* liii. Forster's *Life*, ii. 249.

indulgent and liberal (as many will judge) to a fault, and not well brooking the austere denunciations of some even of the primitive creeds.

On the whole we need not have much hesitation in adding the name of Bishop Taylor to the illustrious cloud of witnesses for Primitive Tradition, which the ensuing pages will present to the reader.

It is in behalf of their constant doctrine, and not of any modern invention, that the writer desires further to protest against certain undue assumptions, on which, as it appears to him, is based nearly the whole of the reasoning of the deniers of Primitive Tradition.

2. Because it is affirmed that the full tradition of Christianity existed before the Christian Scriptures, and so far independent of them, we are charged with alleging two distinct systems or words of GOD, the one written, the other unwritten, running as it were parallel to each other quite down to our own time. But this, by the terms of the case, is plainly unwarranted. If a man were to say that the Severn and the Wye rise separately in the same mountain, one higher up than the other, must he therefore maintain that they never meet before they reach the sea? Tradition and Scripture were at first two streams flowing down from the mountain of GOD, but their waters presently became blended, and it were but a vain and unpractical inquiry, to call upon every one who drinks of them to say, how much of the healing draught came from one source, and how much from the other. On account of those who would poison the stream, it is necessary from time to time to analyse it, and show that it contains no ingredients which were not to be found in one or other of the two fountains; and in so doing, it becomes incidentally manifest, at least in some measure, what portion each of the

two has contributed to the general mass; it is manifest, for example, that all necessary *credenda*, all truths essential to salvation, are contained in the Scripture itself; and is it not equally manifest, that many helps of the greatest consequence, nay I will say generally necessary, to the right development and application of Scripture, are mostly if not entirely derivable from tradition? And is it not a poor kind of reasoning to say, Tradition would have been worthless had we been left to it alone, therefore it cannot be of any value, now that Scripture has been all along at hand, to check, to sustain, to interpret, to rectify it, as the several occasions might require? Yet this is the whole substance of many men's argumentation on the subject: they have argued against an imaginary case, instead of addressing themselves to the realities of Church history; and have thus given an advantage to Romanists on one side and Rationalists on the other, of which neither party has been slow to avail itself. Such is not the way of the English Church; she does not so violently sever the different parts of the constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven, but acknowledging Scripture as her written charter, and Tradition as the common law, whereby both the validity and practical meaning of that charter is ascertained, venerates both as inseparable members of one great providential system; without confounding their provinces, or opposing them to each other, in the manner of modern Rome. Why should it be thought a thing incredible, that persons should be found among her members and ministers desirous to follow, as GOD shall give them grace, in so plain, so reasonable, so moderate, so safe a way? Because they call attention to the fact, that "*Primitive tradition is recognized in Holy Scripture,*" as being, AT THAT TIME, of paramount authority; why should they be presently

suspected of having a system of their own in reserve; a theory, like some parts of Romanism, *still* independent of Holy Scripture, and to be supported by *modern* traditions? more especially if they themselves are careful to declare and exemplify the use they wish to make of the fact in question; viz. to illustrate and enforce, by its aid, certain portions of *the existing Church system*, which they consider to be especially in danger.

3. I say, *of the existing Church system*, here in England: for this is another point on which some protest seems to be required. For it is assumed that the traditions and practices, which the Sermon has most in view, are "obscure and obsolete¹;" and that where persons are called on to search in antiquity for genuine relics of the Apostles, "the question of course concerns those points which are not embodied in our own formularies²." In assuming this, the fact is overlooked, that in the very page of the sermon here referred to, the chief points in question are specified; "being such as these: the canon of Scripture; the full doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation; the oblation and consecration of the Eucharist; the apostolical Succession:" to which, perhaps, it might have been well to add the doctrine of baptismal Regeneration. Surely it is not too much to say, that these points are "embodied in our own formularies;" and, if there be any of them about which the clergy are unhappily not agreed, it is not too much to hope, that in so far as the right use of tradition may clear up what is ambiguous, whether in those formularies or in Scripture itself, it may give some

¹ *Observations on Primitive Tradition, &c.*, by the Rev. Thos. Butt, p. 14. Compare p. 56, 62—64.

² Dr. Wilson's *Brief Examination, &c.* p. 36.

help towards bringing us to a better agreement. This is the very chiefest advantage which the warmest recommenders of tradition in our Church expect from it; viz. that attention to it should very much elevate men's ideas of the existing system, proving it divine in many points where they now ignorantly suppose it human. This, and not the establishment of any mere theory, new or old, is the immediate object of those who have most earnestly urged, from time to time, the reverential study of Christian antiquity. Not that they would entirely shut out the hope of improvement in many respects: thankfully as they own that GOD has preserved to us all things on which the being of a Church depends, they yet feel that much is wanting—more, probably, than can ever be supplied,—of the perfect order and harmony of the apostolical age. Nor do they feel it any breach of fidelity to the Church of England, to join in the confession of one on whom she has ever prided herself, as among her truest children and chiefest ornaments:—

“ The second Temple could not reach the first,
 And the late Reformation never durst
 Compare with ancient times and purer years,
 But, in the Church and us, deserveth tears .”

4. It may be well to protest, once for all, against the allegation so confidently repeated concerning the Sixth Article of the Church of England, as against the claims of primitive tradition¹. To apprehend the drift of that Article exactly, it must be considered as chiefly intended for a guide to the clergy: and will be found in that light

¹ Mr. Butt's *Observations, &c.*, p. 4; Dr. Wilson's *Brief Examination*, p. 12.

exactly to correspond with the engagement in the Ordination and Consecration Services, to “*teach* nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which we shall be persuaded may be *concluded* and *proved* by the Scripture ;” as being “*persuaded* that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all *doctrine* required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in JESUS CHRIST.” A comparison of the two documents will tend to show how carefully they are limited to matters of *doctrine, articles of faith, propositions, the belief* of which may be deemed fundamental and indispensable. Not that Scripture is not divinely perfect as a rule of life and manners also ; but the framers of the Article were not at the time turning their attention that way : they wished to be understood of necessary points of *faith, doctrinal* conditions of admission into CHRIST’S covenant.¹ Observe the wording of that clause, where they compare the canonical with the apocryphal books. “The other books the Church doth read *for example of life and instruction of manners*, but yet doth not apply them *to establish any doctrine*.”

Thus the Article leaves ample scope for the province, which, as we have seen, Bishop Taylor assigned principally to tradition : practical rules relating to the Church of CHRIST. For any thing stated in the Article, such rules might be both divine, and generally necessary to salvation, and yet not be contained in Scripture ; but the doctrines or propositions concerning them would not be necessary : it would be wrong to insert them as Articles of the Creed. For instance, St. Ignatius writes as follows¹ : “Let that Eucharist be accounted valid which is under the Bishop, or some one commissioned by him.”

¹ *Ad Smyrn. c. viii.*

Wherein he lays down the rule, which we know was universally received in the Primitive Church, that consecration by apostolical authority is essential to the participation of the Eucharist, and so far generally necessary to salvation. Now supposing this could not be at all proved from Scripture (as it may, in a great measure, to the satisfaction of unprejudiced minds) still it might be accepted, on the above evidence, as a necessary rule of Church communion, without infringing on our Sixth Article: but it could not be turned into a proposition, and put into the Creed, because that would make not only the rule itself, as observed by the Church, but the knowledge of it also by the individual, necessary to salvation: and it may be thankfully admitted, that knowledge of the true nature of Sacraments is nowhere required in holy Scripture¹, as a condition of our receiving the spiritual grace they impart.

Neither again does the Article say any thing derogatory to the divinely appointed² use of primitive tradition, (i. e. of the Creeds of the Church,) in pointing out which among scriptural truths are fundamental, and ought to be made terms of communion: rather it implies an appeal to such tradition, allowing, as it does expressly, that there may be fundamental truths, the premises whereof only are contained in Scripture, and not the very propositions themselves; which allowance would throw the terms of communion into no small uncertainty, were it not for the

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 29. is no exception to this; since *διακρίνω* means rather "reverent separation" (from common bread) than "accurate knowledge and discernment" in the modern sense. And compare the inspired narrative, St. Matth. ix. 20, &c.

² Gal. i. 8.

Article next but one directing attention especially to the three Creeds, as adequate to supply what the former Article had left wanting; and both together completing the rule of faith; the Creeds presenting the conclusions to be believed, the Scripture confirming them out of the mouth of God.

Moreover, the principle itself of the sufficiency of Scripture is mainly a traditional principle; although when once put in possession of it, we find it irresistibly confirmed by contemplation of the contents of the written Word. But on this subject it were presumptuous to do more than refer the reader to the masterly discussion by Mr. Newman, in the 11th, 12th, and 13th of his lately published Lectures on the Prophetic Office of the Church. One question only shall be added. Do we not discern, on this hypothesis, a very beautiful and instructive harmony between the several provinces of evangelical teaching? the preliminary principle, the sufficiency of the written Word, being taught by tradition and confirmed and illustrated by the Bible, just in the same way as the several doctrines are afterwards. And is not this analogy, as far as it goes, both a material confirmation of the general statement, and also an indication of the purpose of moral probation, which we may believe was one final cause of the whole arrangement? just as, under God's natural government, our probation is the more entire from the circumstance, that we receive our first impressions from Testimony, but must use Observation to confirm or correct them, and cannot long depend upon either quite alone.

Now since we are bound to receive the Articles in their literal and grammatical sense, this construction might be fairly maintained, whatever were the known sentiments of

those who at first imposed them; but the argument for it becomes more forcible, when it is recollected that the same convocation, which first enforced subscription on the clergy, passed also the following canon for the regulation of preaching throughout the kingdom: "That the clergy shall be careful never to teach any thing from the pulpit, to be religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and collected out of that very same doctrine by the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops." This canon, passed 1571, under the auspices of Archbishop Parker, has been often quoted, (among others, repeatedly by Bishop Taylor¹;) as expressing the genuine, permanent sense of the Anglican Church on the matters in question. And it seems fair and natural that it should be so quoted, as often as we are asked on what authority, and by whose warrant, our clergy can be called upon to walk by the rule of primitive antiquity, rather than by their own private judgment.

5. As to any suspicion which may have arisen about limiting primitive tradition to mere formularies², and ministerial faithfulness to the investigation and custody of the traditional safeguards of faith only³: such suspicion must vanish, of course, when it is once well understood that the "depositum" so much insisted on *includes* to us the written Word, as in the first age it doubtless included the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is the whole "orthodox faith;" the whole "Creed of the Apostolical Church, as guaranteed to us by holy Scripture, and by

¹ *Works*, x. 131, 322, 404.

² *Brief Examination*, p. 14, 15, 24, 27, 29, 30.

³ *Ibid.* 33, 51.

consent of pure antiquity." (The writer hopes to be excused for quoting his own words; but he really does not know how to express himself more clearly.) Still, that in the first age there were Creeds and Catechisms, and that the apostolical writings sometimes allude to them, he must still take the liberty of believing: being strengthened in his interpretation by the witness of Bishop Taylor, who, speaking of the Apostles' Creed as "having been always in the Primitive Church esteemed a full and perfect digest of all the necessary and fundamental Articles of Christian religion¹," goes on to say: "St. Paul gave us the first formal intimation of this measure, in his advices to St. Timothy: 'Hold fast the form of sound words² which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.' This was the *depositum* that St. Paul left with Timothy; the *hypotyposis* or summary of Christian belief, the Christian Creed, which St. Paul opposes to the profane new talkings, and the disputations of pretended learning; meaning that this symbol of faith is the thing on which all Christians are to rely, and this is the measure of their faith." Surely it were unfair, on account of such a sentence as this, to accuse Bishop Taylor of shutting up either the Apostles' teaching, or the trust committed to their successors, in one scanty form of words. It is not the

¹ x. 458.

² Bishop Taylor here gives the interpretation of this phrase most approved among moderns. The turn given to it in the Sermon, p. 18, being rather different, it may be right just to mention the reasons of the difference; which are: 1. the want of the definitive article in the Greek: ἔχε ὑποτύπωσιν, not ἔχε τὴν ὑ. 2. The mode of paraphrase adopted by the ancients, especially Chrysostom and Theodoret. Elsewhere Bishop Taylor expounds τύπον διδαχῆς in Rom. vi. 17. as conveying a like allusion. x. 129.

form of words, but the substantial truths, which are meant, when people speak of our still having the Primitive Creed, and of its exclusive vital importance to the very being of the kingdom of heaven. Neither, should it appear at any time requisite to urge on the clergy, as their paramount care, the integrity of doctrinal faith, is this necessarily any disparagement of practical religion, of pastoral vigilance, or of any other of their objects and duties.

II. Thus much by way of protecting the scriptural argument for Primitive Tradition against certain misapprehensions under which it appeared to labour. It may be well to add a few *cautionary* remarks, obvious enough, yet not always regarded by those who take an interest in this subject.

1. We should be careful that we are not, unknown to ourselves, expecting *demonstration*, where *practical proof* only is attainable and ought to be sufficient. Somewhat of this error appears to lurk in those minds, which reject the notion of a rule of faith made up of Scripture and tradition together, on the ground that Scripture is infallible, tradition merely historical. They appear to reason as if there could be no faith without demonstrative infallible evidence. The truer statement surely would be, that such evidence, complete in all its parts, leaves no room for faith; and therefore we are nowhere left to such evidence alone. Is it not so, that in regard of those truths the evidence whereof is most entirely scriptural, we are yet to depend on common historical proof both for the genuineness and the right interpretation of the text? And as the stream can rise no higher than the fountain, so our assent even to scriptural truths differs not from our assent to other well-attested historical propositions, so far as the kind of evidence is concerned. The great point in which it does differ is the deep feeling of awe and reverential attention with which it

is naturally accompanied, from the very circumstance that GOD himself, as we have reason to believe, is speaking from heaven to assure us of these things. Now as far as we have reason to consider any traditional or ecclesiastical rule as being in effect the voice of GOD, so far we shall naturally treat it (the substance of it) with the same *kind* of reverence as we should treat both the substance and the very words of a text from the Bible. For instance, could we be once fully satisfied that the order of consecration of the Holy Eucharist, such as it is gathered out of the Primitive Liturgies ¹, was established by the Apostles under the guidance of the HOLY GHOST, we should be affected by it much as we are by the apostolical writings themselves; *i. e.* with reverence inferior only to that with which we regard our LORD'S own words in the Gospel. Suppose we are not fully satisfied on the point, but only discern a strong probability, sufficient for a wise man to act on; yet surely we are bound, if circumstances allow, to act on it with all devotion: and our doing so will be an exercise of faith, and may humbly hope for the reward of faith. This instance may serve to show that the distinction alluded to is not valid, since on the one hand, scriptural evidence must always presuppose a foundation in

¹ On this subject the argument of the Sermon is much indebted to Mr. Russell, who in his Remarks on it, p. 19, meaning to object to the statement, That without the Liturgies we could not be sure that we bless and consecrate as the Apostles did, affirms, and in good measure proves, that "for some centuries it was deemed sufficient to the consecration to use in substance the words which our SAVIOUR himself used when he instituted the LORD'S Supper." (Of course he implies, what the same Liturgies also prove, that the person consecrating must be a Bishop or Priest, and that there was first a solemn prayer for the appropriate blessing of this great mystery.) But how does he prove his statement? From the very Liturgies, the evidence of which he would dispense with.

that which is historical; and on the other hand, historical or traditional evidence may lead us back to a point so very near the Throne of GOD, as to require of us something of the same *kind* of feeling as if we heard Him speaking in Scripture.

2. Closely allied to this caution is another, too apt to be forgotten by both extremes in this controversy: Not to speak or argue as though we had any right, *a priori*, to expect full satisfaction and comfort here in our religious enquiries. Who are we, that *our* satisfaction, *our* comfort and ease of mind, should be the regulating point (if one may so call it) of the machinery of GOD's dispensations? the index whereby to determine in what measure and degree the Almighty shall have revealed Himself to His creatures? Yet this is virtually premised, both in the schools of Rome, when they argue that there must be on earth an infallible judge of controversies, otherwise the Church will be left in comparative discomfort; and also by those Protestants who account tradition inadmissible, because it is, as they judge, always more or less "uncertain and slippery;" who seem to think that nothing can be, practically, an object of faith, except what is "very distinct in character, clear in its credentials, well authenticated in its details;" and who consider it a sufficient objection to an account of a mystery, that it leaves the nature of the transaction dubious, and admits of no clear statement¹. Experience shows that there is too much

¹ Dr. Wilson, *Brief Examination*, &c. p. 20, 35, 55, 56. Compare the following statement of Mr. Butt: "It is of no practical benefit to imagine . . . the impossible case (*impossible if God's Providence orders all things for the good of his Church*) of the Scriptures never having been written, or having perished with so many other monuments of antiquity." *Observations*, &c. p. 42. And consider, on the other side, that "We are not

danger, lest the enemy take advantage of this longing after completeness and clearness, to turn men aside, ingenious men especially, from the strait and narrow and sometimes broken way, towards some path of human framing, more enticing to such minds, because it seems distincter in its end, better defined and more continuous in its course. But clearness and symmetry of doctrine are a dear purchase, when Christian truth and duty must be impaired for their sake. After all, a fragment of the true Temple is worth all the palaces of modern philosophical theology.

One ill effect of the tone of mind just mentioned, and one which is very little suspected by the parties themselves, is this, that it sets them on limiting our enquiries and opinions more strictly than the Church does: they seem to themselves to move in such fulness of light, that they become after a time quite impatient to see others feeling their way, walking as in twilight, and betraying more or less uncertainty: they little suspect that, perhaps, all the while, they may be but "walking in the light of their own fire, and in the sparks which themselves have kindled," while the others may be gradually learning to "trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon their GOD¹." However, in the state of things which the holy Prophet here describes, those who seem to themselves illuminated become after a time, as was said, impatient of the caution and comparative timidity of the others, and are wont to interfere, more or less rudely, to force or

in any sort able to judge, whether it were to have been expected that the revelation should have been committed to writing, or left to be handed down, and consequently corrupted, by verbal tradition, and at length sunk under it, if mankind so pleased." Bishop Butler, *Anal.* p. ii. c. 3. p. 240. Oxford, 1807.

¹ Isaiah i. 10.

frighten them into their own way. Is it not from some impression of this kind, that among the persons who are most averse to tradition, on this express ground, that they require things to be distinct and certain, are those who would tie us down most strictly to the very letter of the Homilies? although it is most clear from the wording of the 35th Article, that the recommendation of them to the Church by authority was but general as to their substance, and bore express reference to that particular time¹. Nay, and the matter has been carried so far as to demand rejection, at the hands of the clergy, of all that is (not “inconsistent with,” but) “unauthorised by” the Thirty-nine Articles²: as if the Articles were either a rule of faith, or a complete system of theology; as if they were in any sense conditions of lay communion; as if the Liturgy added nothing to the declaration of the mind of the Church of England; or as if, on the other hand, it were impossible to urge any thing as vitally important, without setting it forth as a formal condition of Church communion, nay, even of final salvation³.

3. But the cardinal point, on which, it would seem, all men require warning, from beginning to end of these discussions, is *the irreverent use of reason*. There is continual danger of our treating as profane what, for ought we know, may be sacred, though not as yet proved to be so; danger of slighting divine mysteries because we cannot comprehend or explain them; danger of forfeiting divine grace, because, being unable to trace its workings, we will not be at the trouble of seeking it. Even in the course of the brief controversy which the present Sermon has occa-

¹ See Bishop Jebb, *Practical Theology*, ii. 283, &c.

² *Brief Examination*, p. 57.

³ *Ibid.* p. 56.

sioned, some remarkable facts have occurred, to strengthen the impression which all Church history would make, as to the ill tendencies inseparable from disregard of antiquity.

For example, in answer to the allegation, that our assurance of the spiritual interpretation of Solomon's Song depends mainly on a constant tradition of the early Church, it is replied that a spiritual interpretation is, from the evidence "of the book itself, the only one that is consistent with its canonicity¹." What is this but expressly submitting the Canon of Scripture, so far, to each man's private taste and judgment? what is it but laying down rules before-hand what inspired writings ought to be? At this very time, in regard of this very book, we see the effect of such licentious discussion; the most distinguished living theologian among dissenters having refused to accept it as part of the sacred Scripture, on the ground that *he cannot see* how it may be expounded in any sense which *he considers* worthy of a divine origin². The opponent of tradition, indeed, goes on to say, that "we are scripturally led to interpret the Canticles as we do the 45th Psalm, and many similar portions of Scripture." But how are we so led? Not by any reference in the New Testament, for the book is not once cited or alluded to, but by analogy of several passages in which the same kind of allegory is employed. Now how do we know that we have a right to assume such an analogy here? Scripture itself does not affirm it. Reason is not so positive about it, but that many distinguished interpreters have laid down a rule inconsistent with such an application of it—the rule, namely,

¹ *Ch. Observer*, May, 1837, p. 328.

² *Scripture Testim. to the Messiah*, i. 46. ed. 2.

that nothing must be received as a type, without¹ “*solid proof* from Scripture itself” of “the Divine intention in the correspondence between it and the antitype.” The most that we can attain to, on such premises, is to say that the book may be *possibly* canonical (i. e. if history is right in saying that it made part of the Jewish Scriptures at the time when our LORD set his seal on them) ; but on the interpretation of it we must be absolutely silent, for the literal meaning is pronounced unworthy of Scripture, and, concerning any other, nothing is revealed. Nor would this be incredible to such as are convinced that we are in no sort judges before-hand, what sort of a book Scripture was likely to be, how far intelligible at all, how far its own interpreter : but to those who have made up their minds that it must be “a volume which may be understood,” and understood “without traditional aid²,” the case is too likely to prove matter of serious offence. The more comfortable, surely, as well as the more religious way is, to accept, with all reverence, whatever intimations God has graciously vouchsafed for aiding our conviction, both of the genuineness and of the right exposition of the sacred books. Let us ask of those to whom Scripture was first delivered, those who had the means of consulting inspired persons as to the meaning of obscure places. We shall find these agreeing in the following rule of interpretation : That the types and figures which the New Testament expressly notices out of the Old, are but a few out of many, specimens or ensamples, as it were, of the manner in which the HOLY GHOST wills us to regard the whole of the former dispensation. This gives us just what

¹ Bishop Van Mildert, as quoted in Horne's *Introduction*, ii. 724.

² *Ch. Obs.* ubi supra.

we want: authority for applying the imagery which we find in the forty-fifth Psalm and elsewhere, to the exposition of the similar imagery in Solomon's Song; although the two differ in this material point, that the one is formally quoted in the New Testament, the other not even obscurely alluded to. When we take into consideration the witness of the first ages, we feel that this sacred application rests no longer on our own critical conjectures, but upon fair practical evidence, that men of GOD so taught in the beginning of the Gospel.

To this it will be presently said, You are claiming the sanction of inspiration to all the extravagancies of the early mystical expounders. And it may be as shortly replied, We are doing no such thing: we claim attention to the fact, that a certain *rule* of interpretation was recognised by those, who could not, all things considered, be deceived in the matter; but it does not follow that in their *application* of the rule they were left in no measure to their own fallible judgment. The principle, that Scripture is sufficient for the substance of the faith, is a sacred principle, and infallibly, i. e. certainly, true, without any kind of exception; yet men may err, and have erred, in *their selection* of fundamentals out of Scripture. So in this matter of primitive exposition; we may receive with respect, nay with awe, the rule of regarding the New Testament quotations as ensamples only of the true way to interpret the Old, without at all claiming infallibility for the details of any comment, professing to be founded on that rule.

Not but that, in some instances, the catholic consent, even on details of interpretation, is so marked and unquestionable, and comes with so much authority, as to justify us in concluding that besides the general rule regarding

all types, they had a special witness from the first age to the meaning of the HOLY GHOST in those particular texts. A prominent case of that kind is the allegorical application of the Canticles: concerning the proof of which from antiquity, whoever permits himself to speak lightly, had better take care lest he be found slighting a very gracious providence of God, for the protection of a portion of His word, peculiarly exposed to the rudeness of the scorner. Such an one will perhaps do well to consider, whether he be going the true way to encourage, in himself or in others, veneration for the Bible.

4. This instance has been dwelt on the longer, as peculiarly apt to confirm and illustrate the position, "that the Holy Scriptures themselves may be fast losing reverence through the resolute defiance of tradition which some affect." And is there not ground to apprehend the like with regard to the Holy Sacraments also? What but a too exclusive jealousy of tradition could have prevented the writer of the sentence noted below¹ from perceiving that it sounds as if he were disavowing all serious interest in the subjects there enumerated? a disavowal which, of course, was very far from his thoughts. And what shall we say to the following sentences, relating to the same Holy Mysteries? "The medium between affirming transubstantiation and denying the Presence, it seems, is believing a miracle. But what is this miracle? Is the nature and character of it left so dubious, both by Scripture and Tradition too, that nothing more can be said, while the demand is enforced,

¹ *Brief Examination*, &c. p. 43. "Those who feel more interest in the subject may require the author more fully to explain what he means by 'apostolical succession,' 'oblation of the Eucharist,' its 'virtue and efficacy,' the 'life-giving miracle,' &c. &c."

than that it must be believed, because it is 'life-giving'¹?" To the first of these questions reply shall be made in the words of the Church Catechism. The miracle intended is this, "that the body and blood of CHRIST are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD's Supper." And it is called "life-giving," because it is the appointed means of participation of CHRIST, who is "a quickening Spirit," and "our life;" even as He Himself said, "I am that bread of life," and "he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life." The objector goes on: "Does the miracle consist in the giving of life? Then is GOD robbed of His prerogative." Did our SAVIOUR then forego His prerogative of opening the eyes of the blind, when He first "spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle," and then "anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay?" It is asked again, "Is a miracle first wrought upon the elements, that they may give life? Then is the SPIRIT repelled from His own especial ordinance, and a symbol lifted up in the Church in the place of the Giver of Life." In answer to this, it may perhaps be best to refer to the Primitive Liturgies², and to that of our own Church as it was originally formed from them in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI.

The Primitive Liturgies, with the exception perhaps of the Roman, agree in distinctly invoking GOD the HOLY GHOST to descend upon the sacred elements, and prepare them to be the communication of CHRIST's body and blood (and therefore of life supernatural) to the faithful. *E. g.* the Alexandrian Liturgy, denominated from St. Basil (the very

¹ *Ibid.* p. 55.

² Which, in those points wherein they agree, are equivalent to a genuine formulary of the first age. See Palmer's *Dissertation on Primitive Liturgies*, prefixed to his *Origines Liturgicæ*, and *Tracts for the Times*, No. 63.

words of which, in not a few cases, may be satisfactorily traced back at least to his own time), appoints this supplication to be used immediately after the commemoration of the words of institution¹. “ We therefore, also, remembering His holy sufferings, His rising again from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His sitting on the right hand of Thee, who art GOD and FATHER, and His glorious and fearful coming again, offer unto Thee Thine own, out of Thine own gifts. And we supplicate and beseech Thee, merciful and gracious LORD,—we Thy sinful and unworthy servants,—and worship Thee, that by the good pleasure of Thy goodness, Thy HOLY SPIRIT may come upon us Thy servants, and upon these Thy gifts here set forth, and sanctify and exhibit them to be most holy: and may cause this bread to become the holy body of Him our LORD and GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, unto forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, to those who partake thereof: and this cup, the precious blood of the New Testament of Him our LORD and GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, unto forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who partake thereof. And do Thou count us worthy, O LORD, to partake of Thy holy mysteries, unto sanctification of soul and body and spirit, that we may become one body and one spirit, and may find a portion and inheritance to possess with all Thy saints, who from all time have been well pleasing in Thy sight.” The first Prayer Book of King Edward VI. directed consecration to be made as follows: “ Heare us, O mercyfull FATHER, we beseeche Thee, and with Thy HOLY SPIRIT and worde vouchsafe to blesse and sanctifie these Thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the bodie and blood

¹ S. Basili Op. ed. Bened. t. iii. p. 678, 9.

of Thy most derely beloved Sonne JESUS CHRISTE; who in the same night," &c. (as in our present service). So far is the teaching of Tradition, on this point, from neglecting to honour the Giver of Life in the Sacrament of eternal life.

On the contrary, it may be thought, that if circumstances had permitted this part of the ancient service to be retained, communicants would have been so much the more effectually taught to give glory to the blessed SPIRIT, not only by the tenor of the Liturgy itself, but also by the light which it would have thrown on certain passages of holy writ, which, as things are, they hardly understand to refer to the Communion at all; such (*e. g.*) as where the Corinthians are reminded, "By one SPIRIT ye have been all baptised into one body, . . . and ye' have been all made to drink into one SPIRIT¹;" and where St. John mentions together as Three combining in One witness, the SPIRIT, and the Water, and the Blood: premising his remark with the following verse, which, to any one familiar with the ancient Liturgical services, must have sounded very descriptive of the Communion: "This is He that came" (or rather "cometh," ἔλθων) "by water

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 13. "i. e. We have arrived at the same mysterious privilege, we partake of the same table. And why said he not, We are fed with the same body, and drink the same blood? Because, by the word Spirit he indicated both—both the blood and the flesh—for by means of both we are made to drink of one SPIRIT. But, as I think, he is here speaking of *that visitation of the SPIRIT which takes place after Baptism and before the holy Communion*:" ἐκείνην τοῦ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ τὴν ἐπιφοίτησιν, τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος καὶ πρὸ τῶν μυστηρίων ἐγγινομένην ἡμῖν." See St. Chrys. *in loco*. As much as to say that the Spirit here spoken of is the HOLY GHOST, shewing Himself especially in the two Sacraments; by His regenerating grace ensuing upon the Sacrament of Baptism, and by His consecrating grace preparing both the worshippers and the elements for the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

and blood, even JESUS CHRIST :” (for in those days they always mixed water in the cup of blessing ; and some, at least in St. Cyprian’s time, thought they might consecrate with water only¹ ; which error and irreverence, if it existed in St. John’s day also, might give occasion to the following clause) : “ Not by water only, but by water and blood. And,” he proceeds, “ it is the SPIRIT that beareth witness, because the SPIRIT is Truth,” or “ The Truth :” that which causes the reality and substance of the Sacraments, and hinders them from being mere signs and shadows. This conjectural interpretation is offered without any prejudice to the part which holy Baptism may be reasonably supposed to claim in the inspired allusion and argument, since there also is a combination of the visible water and the cleansing blood of CHRIST, and the HOLY SPIRIT is the agent, and has the glory².

To return to our immediate subject ; it is painful to observe, in the course of this controversy, such a phrase as “ real inward communion with our LORD through His Apostles ;”—by which is meant participation of CHRIST by the mean which He Himself ordained, and which He committed to the keeping of His Apostles only ;—it is painful to observe this phrase caught up and used in a sarcastic sense : painful also to find that inability to

¹ Ep. 63. p. 148, &c. Ed. Fell.

² Another text, which is with great reason supposed to convey the same allusion, is Rom. xv. 15. “ The grace that is given me of GOD, that I should be the *Minister* (λειτουργόν) of JESUS CHRIST unto the Gentiles, *exercising the priest’s office* (ιερουργοῦντα) in respect of the Gospel of GOD : that the *offering up* (προσφορά) of the Gentiles might be acceptable, BEING SANCTIFIED BY THE HOLY GHOST : (ἡγιασμένη ἐν ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ ἉΓΙΩ.)” In which passage are four or five liturgical words. This remark is borrowed from the papers of a deceased friend, which it is hoped will be given to the world before long. He seems to have taken it from a passage in Bp. Hicke.

understand the precise nature of the privilege intended is considered as a sufficient bar to any devout practical remembrance of it.

One more quotation under this head shall be given without any remark : “ As to Mr. Keble’s notions of ‘ the life-giving miracle ’ of ‘ CHRIST’s real Presence,’ which ‘ has been left throughly mysterious both by Scripture and tradition,’ we shall only say that the records of Popery abundantly prove that mysticism is neither theology nor piety¹ .”

5. The Apostolical Succession is another subject sure almost to attract to itself whatever particles of instinctive rationalism may be lurking in the mind to which it is presented. But surely in the outset it may claim to be treated with seriousness, on the ground urged by Bishop Butler against the despisers of religion in general ; viz., that the *a priori* objections which occur to ingenious men concerning it, are such as may be urged against GOD’s natural government, which is plain undeniable matter of fact in spite of all such objections ; therefore the apostolical succession *may*, as far as similar objections go, turn out matter of fact also, and the light extemporal way in which many reject it *may* have results similar to those, which attend the like rejection of other mysteries, whether of natural or of revealed religion. This consideration alone ought to protect the doctrine against insinuations, whether grave or sportive, that it is of course unworthy of GOD, because it represents Him as making the spiritual welfare of one man depend on the manner in which another executes his trust. Whatever is said against that dispensation would hold against what we daily see in the course of nature, as we call it. The

¹ *Christ. Obs.* May, 1837, p. 329.

moral condition of children is influenced by the conduct of their parents; of subjects by that of their rulers, and the like; and why should it not be equally credible, that even fallible and unworthy men may be endued with real power to put their brethren out of the Church, or admit them into it; *i. e.* to change their condition in such a manner as shall make the greatest possible difference in respect of revealed and covenanted privileges? (It is not said, "*immediately in respect of final salvation.*") Now this defensive argument from experience is so obvious in this case, and lies so near the root of all religion whatever, that it almost seems to be irreligious thoughtlessness, when men allow themselves to deride the Succession, either before all enquiry, or because on enquiry they find the evidence not so irresistible as they think it ought to be, or because the Succession itself is represented as a mystery, and of course left, as all mysteries are, in some respects dimly revealed; *i. e.* in the world's language, "vague and indistinct." That which was said to an impatient controversialist of old may be applied in this case, "Strike, but hear me;" do your best in argument if you can any how refute the claim of the Succession, but do not dismiss it, unexamined, in any kind of hasty feeling. Do not set it aside by saying, "Those who feel more interest in the subject may require its defenders more fully to explain what they mean by it;" or by treating it as "a new discovery in tradition,"—a vague idea of certain individuals only,—when all men know that it is a received theological term, denoting a doctrine clearly enough understood, and always maintained, whether truly or untruly, by more or fewer in this Church of England (to say nothing now of other times and churches) ever since the following statement was put forth by authority of Arch-

bishop Cranmer: "Order is a gift of grace or ministration in CHRIST'S Church, given of GOD to Christian men by the consecration and imposition of the Bishop's hands upon them . . . and as the Apostles themselves, in the beginning of the Church, did order Priests and Bishops, so they appointed and willed the other Bishops after them to do the like¹."

One would think the appearance, *prima facie*, of the doctrine in the Church Prayer Book might save it at least from being treated with contumely. This is a matter on which especial challenge has been made, and that challenge is accepted most willingly. On comparing different expressions of censure, it should seem that the phrase most objected to is "the grace of the apostolical succession." Two points are implied in the phrase; first, that the sacerdotal office in the Christian Church is conveyed by succession from the Apostles; secondly, that a peculiar grace or gift of the HOLY GHOST accompanies the conveyance of that office.

As to the first; if the Articles are to be taken in their literal and grammatical sense, surely the 23d Article affirms the principle of the succession, however confidently men quote it on the contrary side. The way to judge of this is to see how it would work in *practice*; for, as was remarked above, the Articles are altogether of a practical cast, adapted to the actual guidance of this Church and of her Ministers under controversies and cases really existing. Thus the Article in question supposes a person claiming to be a Christian Minister, and supplies a simple test whereby to determine whether such his claim be valid. It directs that this

¹ *Necessary Doctrine, &c.* 1543. ap. *Formularies of Faith temp. Hen. VIII.* Oxford, 1825, p. 277-8.

question be asked, “*Who called you to the office you assume? Was it one who had public authority given him to do so?*” Now apply this to the first person professing to be ordained by Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley. Would he not, if he spake truth, be obliged to answer the second question in the negative? Must we not, by the letter of the Article, deny his commission? Suppose him nevertheless to go on, and pretend not only to preach, baptize, and consecrate, but also to ordain others, still pleading the same warrant, a commission to do so from Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley. Would not the same process have to be repeated, and with the same result, in the case of each person claiming to be ordained by him? unless we will say that though Luther or Calvin could not himself lawfully ordain, he might empower others to do so; which no one probably would ever think of maintaining. The Article therefore virtually enforces succession as the test of a lawful ministry. Were it strictly observed, no person, having only Lutheran, Calvinist, or Wesleyan orders, could ever be allowed to preach or minister the Sacraments in the congregation.

The title of Bishop indeed is not mentioned, and it may be that it was avoided on purpose to make the exclusion intended less invidious; but what if it turn out, as sometimes in Acts of Parliament, that the *description* answer the end of the enactment *more effectually* than the *name* would have done? Had it been simply said, “Those we judge lawfully called, who have their calling and mission from Bishops,” there would have been perhaps room for the Genevan allegation, that all Presbyters, being in fact Bishops, received with their office the power of ordaining; but now the Article precludes this, by reciting (so to call it) the *special clause* in the episcopal commission, on which

the whole matter turns; as much as to say, "People may call themselves Bishops; but if they cannot shew that they have received this particular prerogative, we will not have their ordinations accounted lawful¹." This meets the case of Danish ordinations at present; their superintendants are called Bishops, but there has been a break in the chain, and their ministers cannot make good the test required in the Article: consequently they cannot, according to our rule, be admitted to officiate in English churches. This is mentioned to show the *practical* bearing of the Article.

Observe now what would follow from this, if we could agree with those who consider the Articles as a Confession of Faith, supposing the term Confession of Faith to be taken in its usual and obvious meaning; viz. for a Creed, or enumeration of doctrinal fundamentals. Belief in the exclusion of all but episcopal orders, instead of being left indifferent, will be absolutely *made a condition of communion*; the very error which is falsely charged on the maintainers of apostolical succession; who believe it to be a divine and necessary ordinance, but are far from wishing it to be put in the Creed, or from requiring the express Knowledge and profession of it as a term of admission into the kingdom of Heaven.

But there is another place, where the English Church

¹ It may be worth remarking here that the Prayer Book of Elizabeth is the first which inserts in the Consecration Service an express mention of the power of Ordination as one of the especial prerogatives of Bishops, in the question, namely, "Will you be faithful in ordaining, sending, and laying hands on others?" In all former ordinals, as Mr. Palmer shows, that power was understood of course as part of the episcopal office; no clause formally relating to it had been accounted necessary. The insertion afterwards may be thought to indicate an anxiety to point out the necessity of the test required in the Article.

defines who shall be taken for a lawful minister, viz. the Preface to the Ordination Service, and that in the following words: "No man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the United Church of England and Ireland, . . . except he be called thereunto according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly EPISCOPAL consecration or ordination." Is it to be supposed that the Church, in different parts of her formularies, intended to give different accounts of the test of a lawful ministry? If not, then we have reason to believe that the Bishops, and the Bishops only, were in her mind, when she spoke in her twenty-third Article of a lawful calling being that which proceeds from "men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers in to the LORD's vineyard." The rather, as the thirty-sixth Article expressly adopts and approves the Ordination Services, affirming, on the one hand, against the Papists, that they "contain all things necessary to consecration and ordering;" on the other hand, against the Puritans, that "neither have they any thing that of itself is superstitious and ungodly." In which latter clause is implied an adoption of the other doctrine now excepted against—the doctrine of ministerial grace derived by succession from the Apostles; which doctrine, as will presently appear, runs through the Ordination Services.

But before proceeding to that head, let the reason be noticed, which the English Church herself assigns, for limiting her acknowledgment of a lawful call to those who have had episcopal consecration or ordination. It is "to the intent that these orders may be CONTINUED, and reverently used and esteemed in the Church of England." Without such limitation, it would seem, the Church judges

that the orders would not be "continued." This sounds a good deal like succession by episcopal ordination; and the following words of the same preface carry back the succession to the Apostles: "It is evident to all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that *from the Apostles' time* there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

We learn from this preface what to think of the occasional allowance of Presbyterian orders, which seems to have taken place during the first years of the Reformation, and which is supposed by some to receive sanction from a certain Act of the 13th of Elizabeth. It was neither more nor less than an illegal irregular proceeding, connived at sometimes for supposed edification's sake, sometimes for political reasons; but from time to time excepted against, as in the case of Whittingham, by Archbishop Sandys; in that of Travers, by Archbishop Whitgift; and never, as it may seem, effectually vindicated. And as both the above-mentioned cases occurred after the Act of the 13th of Elizabeth, one might with some likelihood infer, that it was the intention of that Act to take away doubt touching the admissibility of Romish rather than of Genevan letters of orders. Clearly it was so understood and acted on; as is shewn by the complaints of Travers in his own behalf, and of Lord Huntingdon in behalf of Whittingham¹. Anyhow, the Act, resting only on secular authority, cannot have done away with the ordination service, which is still received by solemn subscription of the whole clergy of England. And if the meaning of it was such as is pretended, it is but one more instance of the danger of

¹ Travers ap. Hooker, iii. 690; Strype, *Ann.* II. 2. p. 168, 620.

allowing mere statesmen to legislate for the Church. In the mean time, nothing which then took place can in any way affect our present succession ; it not being averred by any one that ever the office of Bishop was allowed to be exercised on such ordination. Nor, as long as the Ordination Services, with their preface, shall remain as they are, can the Church of England be fairly made responsible for any irregularity of the kind, any more than for the late suppression of bishopricks, by a Parliament in which Dissenters held sway. She may suffer intrusion, but her witness to the truth remains.

We have next to examine, whether the Church formularies seem to encourage the idea, that the episcopal succession is a channel of any special grace. We need not be long to seek : the cavils of the Church's enemies will presently direct us to the right point. "The HOLY GHOST," said Cartwright and Travers, "you cannot give, and therefore you foolishly bid men receive it¹." What was the reply of the Church's defender ? Did he disavow all mystical import in the sacred words "Receive the HOLY GHOST," as employed in the ordination services ? Did he explain them away, as carrying with them no more than the virtue of a prayer, on behalf of the newly ordained, that they might be faithful, and their ministry blessed² ? Nay, the language, of which he was so unrivalled a master, fails him, as it were, in his endeavour to find words to express the greatness of the gift which he there apprehended. "The HOLY GHOST," says he³, "which our LORD then gave," (when he spake the words to his Apostles,) "was a holy and a ghostly authority, authority over

¹ Hooker, V. lxxvii. 5.

² See Burnet on *Art.* 36.

³ Hooker, V. lxxvii. 7, 8.

the souls of men, authority, a part whereof consisteth in power to remit and retain sins: 'Receive the HOLY GHOST; whose sins soever ye remit, they are remitted; whose sins ye retain, they are retained.' . . . Seeing therefore that *the same power is now given*, why should the same form of words expressing it be thought foolish? . . . The power and authority delivered with those words is itself *χαρίσμα*, a gracious donation which the SPIRIT of GOD doth bestow." And besides, "we may most assuredly persuade ourselves that the hand which imposeth upon us the function of our ministry, doth, under the same form of words, so tie itself thereunto, that he which receiveth the burthen is thereby for ever warranted to have the SPIRIT with him and in him for his assistance, countenance, and support, in whatsoever he faithfully doth to discharge duty. . . . When we take ordination, we also receive the presence of the HOLY GHOST, partly to guide, direct, and strengthen us in all our ways, and partly to assume unto itself, for the more authority, those actions that appertain to our place and calling. . . . We have for the least and lowest duties performed by virtue of ministerial power, *that* to dignify, grace, and authorize them, which no other offices on earth can challenge. Whether we preach, pray, baptize, communicate, condemn, give absolution, or whatever, as disposers of GOD's mysteries; our words, judgments, acts, and deeds, are not ours, but the HOLY GHOST's." Before, in a still more striking passage¹, he had borne testimony not only to the reality of the grace then and there given, but also to the ordinary necessity of being able to show our LORD's warrant for conferring it; i. e., in other words, to the apostolical succession. "The power of the ministry of

¹ V. lxxvii. 1.

GOD translatheth out of darkness into glory ; it raiseth men from the earth, and bringeth GOD himself down from heaven ; by blessing visible elements, it maketh them invisible grace ; it giveth daily the HOLY GHOST ; it hath to dispose of that Flesh which was given for the life of the world, and that Blood which was poured out to redeem souls ; when it poureth malediction upon the heads of the wicked they perish ; when it revoketh the same they revive. O wretched blindness, if we admire not so great power, more wretched if we consider it aright, and notwithstanding imagine that any but GOD can bestow it !”

Hooker then made no question as to the mystical import and virtue of the form, wherewith the Church of England ordains and consecrates. And his construction seems to be greatly confirmed by the choice of lessons which she has made for those occasions, by the scriptural allusions of which the offices are full, and by the use of the solemn prayer, *Veni Creator*, immediately before the laying on of hands.

In these short and occasional remarks, it was not possible to do justice to so high an argument : but the Author hopes that enough has been said, to show that there are appearances of both the succession and the grace conveyed by it being recognized, as well in the Articles as in the Ordination Service. There is so much in favour of them, as ought to protect the whole subject from scornful indifference and dismissal without examination ¹.

¹ These words perhaps may be taken, as similar words in the Sermon have been, (see *Observations, &c.*, p. 81,) for indications of the author's opinion as to the prevailing tone of thought among the clergy on subjects of this kind. He can only say that he was far from any such sentiment : his censures, where he does censure, are directed against the spirit of the age, not against the clerical body ; among whom he thankfully and hopefully

Nor let any person shrink from this view, under the notion that it invests the ministry with any thing like infallible authority. We may not be able to conceive how, yet undoubtedly so it is, that a man may receive the grace of GOD in vain; he may defile the temple of the HOLY GHOST; he may have supernatural grace dwelling in him, to guide him into all goodness, and yet may be "almost in all evil:" why then should it be incredible that a minister of GOD, as such, may have the same SPIRIT specially abiding in *him*, as for all other parts of his office, so for the custody of the good deposit, the fundamentals of doctrine and practice, and yet be liable to error, and heresy, and apostasy? That grace implies infallibility, is an error of the same school, which supposes that faith cannot be required except on overpowering, demonstrative evidence; which is impatient of obscurity and indistinctness, and longs after present visible *effect*; which fancies, in the pregnant words of a great writer¹, "that it cannot be thought GOD would have bestowed any favour at all upon us, unless in the degree which we think He might;" and where there is instruction, and spiritual aid, and a chance of salvation, concludes that there must of necessity be also comfort, and assurance, and satisfaction of mind.

6. Once more. There appears to be danger of irreverence—danger of a very subtle and insidious kind—in declining *religiously* to accept universal tradition (con-

acknowledges, that a far better spirit prevails, and is likely to prevail. Further, the phrases objected to, in many cases, do not imply censure at all. They are forms of expression which naturally occur where one is arguing, on the method of Bp. Butler, not that a thing is actually true, but that it is worth considering, and, till disproved, ought to be acted on: which is all that the Sermon pretends to.

¹ Bp. Butler, *Anal.* p. II. c. vi. near the beginning.

firmed as it is by Scripture) as our guide in the *selection of fundamentals*: if at least it be irreverence, rather to choose for ourselves among Scripture truths, which we will regard as fundamental, and which secondary, than to acquiesce in the choice made for us with such evidence of providential guidance, as reasonable persons would consider sufficient in all other practical matters.

The word Irreverence, let it be observed, is used here to denote the *tendency* of the principle, not the *actual feeling* of any particular person. No doubt, among those who have been trained in the notion here combated, are many of most reverential hearts and lives; and one sign of their being so is, that they do almost always, more or less unconsciously perhaps, yet really, use the Creed of their Baptism, the baptismal Creed of the holy Church Universal, to help them in making their selection, and to test it when made¹.

But the farther we are from questioning any individual's devotion and reverence, the more necessary does it seem to be on our guard against the principle, if erroneous: since its acceptance by such persons is an alarming symptom of its very general influence. The principle meant is that which would make it necessary for each person to select for himself a certain number of divine truths out of the great body of the Scriptures, on which he may lay his finger and say; "This, and this alone, is the Gospel: it hangs together as one perfect whole²." Surely this is a startling kind of proposition, to be enunciated by any individual as the result of his own inquiries. Surely it is not a prerogative to be

¹ Compare Mr. Butt's *Observations*, &c., p. 5—13, with p. 24, 25, especially line 3—8, of p. 25.

² *Observations*, p. 10.

lightly assumed, that of sitting in judgment on Scripture truths, and determining which are essential as formal objects of belief, and which not. Surely it involves a responsibility far more perilous, and a labour far more overwhelming, than the method which the Sermon recommends; accepting, namely, as the Gospel, the substance of the baptismal Creed; testing it by Scripture; and, when it has been scripturally verified, acquiescing in the judgment of the Church—the Primitive Universal Church—concerning its sufficiency.

Observe, what is insisted on is the *substance*, not the identical expressions of the Creed¹: according to the general if not universal difference between the traditional and written relics of the Apostles; that in the former, the *things* only,—in the latter, the very *words* also,—are holy. This may suffice to answer historical objections, drawn from the variation in terms between reports made of the baptismal Creed by Tertullian, Cyprian, Irenæus, and others; to which, if one added the partial enumeration by St. Paul in the beginning of 1 Cor. xv., a good deal might be said for the probability of such a conjecture.

But are there not other objections felt, besides historical ones, to the paramount authority of the Creed? The expression, “It hangs together as one perfect whole,” would seem to imply a disposition to require, as essential to any statement of fundamentals, that its parts should be connected with one another *in a manner intelligible to us*; whereas the propositions of the Creed are isolated in form, and do not at all impress the mind with any necessity of apprehending them as portions of an entire system. For any thing that appears on the face of the document, it may be sufficient heartily to receive, and practically to

¹ See *Observations, &c.*, p. 29.

acknowledge, each truth as it there stands, whether we discern much or little of their relation to each other. Here then is a remarkable difference between the traditional statement of fundamentals, and those which devout and ingenious men are in the habit of selecting and arranging for themselves. System, method, connection, mutual illustration, is a *sine qua non* in the one; not so in the other. What authority have we for so insisting on it? Scripture says, such and such things are necessary: does it any where say, we must be able to show why they are necessary? Is not the rule applicable in respect of our faith towards God, which holds in all other parts of our moral conduct? “The *fact* is the main point or principle; and, if in such matters *that* be made sufficiently evident, there will be no need to give the *reason* besides¹.” We have here, then, a *second* instance of unconscious irreverence, into which those who refuse Primitive Tradition as their guide to the selection of fundamentals are almost inevitably betrayed. Professing and intending to confine themselves to the written Word of God, they do in effect bring in a mere human unauthorized tradition; viz. that in order to a right faith in the Gospel, the connection of its parts as a system must be discerned².

¹ Ἀρχὴ τὸ ὅτι· καὶ εἰ ἐν τούτοις φαίνοιτο ἀρκούντως, οὐδὲν προσδεήσει τοῦ διότι.

² It seems to have been a fallacy of this kind which led to the censure uttered in the course of this controversy (Mr. Russell's *Remarks*, p. 21, 37, &c.), on the assertion that the Atonement was not a *manifestation of God's justice*: by which is probably meant, that *we have no sufficient data to prove it exactly just*, according to our notion of justice. No one denies that it is an awful signification of God's justice, so far as it is fitted and intended to impress our minds with a deep sense of His real hatred of sin. Of course, if faith implies full and systematic understanding, to say that you cannot explain our LORD's satisfaction is equivalent to saying you do not believe it. Not so, on any other supposition. But “the *deductions* of supernatural truth

From which immediately follows a *third* great evil: that when, after our best efforts, we are not able to make out the place of any particular doctrine in the system, we are tempted to leave it out of our Creed, as unessential, at any rate to us. The common pervading attractive force, by the supposed laws of which it has become usual in our days to adjust the relation of the parts of Christianity with each other, is their tendency to act on the soul of man, and produce in him such and such heavenly dispositions. Those doctrines, in which it is less easy to discern any such practical tendency, are of course comparatively disregarded. May it be permitted to exemplify what is meant, by a passage, which however it is not intended to charge with any kind of presumption or irreverence, but only so far as such qualities may appear to be inseparable from the theory in question¹?

“No truths, whether positively declared in Scripture, or inferred from it by legitimate reasoning, or founded on the tradition and usage of the Church, or deduced from the light of Nature, are to be placed on a level with the Gospel, considered as a transaction between God and the soul of man; and in this character I am anxious to pourtray it. This is an exclusive, unmingled treasure, which I would hedge in, as it were, with an impassable circle. It is the second covenant—the covenant of grace. I would lay it up are not within the sphere of the human intellect. They are not to be inferred as discoverable conclusions from one primary principle. A Redeemer being foretold, His divine nature, His incarnation, the vicarious nature of His suffering, His death, and the atoning efficacy of it;—all these, though real connections of truth, comprehended, with the original promise, in the scheme of the Divine economy, come down to man like new streams of light by their separate channels; and when they are communicated in their proper form, then we know them, not before.” Davison on *Primitive Sacrifice*, p. 152.

¹ *Observations*, p. 12, 13.

before the LORD in his most holy place within the ark, and under the overshadowing mercy-seat. Every Christian is now consecrated to enter with boldness within the veil, and plead there the merit of the blood of JESUS, and to claim a share in the privileges which this sacrifice has sealed to him. And provided such unapproachable pre-eminence is awarded to the truths which relate to high and solemn communication between the pardoned sinner and his GOD, while no comparative stranger is allowed to intermeddle with these, I am desirous of yielding to all other truths the reverence or obedience which on full consideration appears to be due to each of them respectively. Without much caution they ought not even to be arranged in classes."

The remark in the last sentence would seem to be a wholesome check on the preceding, were it not for the reason added: namely, that "*even scriptural verities are separated from each other by a great interval of relative importance.*" They must be arranged, then, as far as possible, *one by one*, according to their more or less visible connection with that scheme of scriptural truths, which each person has made out to be his own gospel. Can this be proved by reason or Scripture? Is it not a mere human tradition, contrary to the analogy of GOD'S natural and moral government, and traceable to a known infirmity of fallen mankind?

But to proceed: the secret but sure *tendency* of measuring the vitality of any truth, by the clearness with which we discern its connection with "the Gospel, considered as a transaction between GOD and the soul of man," is to withdraw attention, and finally faith, from the unseen truths themselves, towards the process in our own minds, which is matter of feeling and experience: *e. g.* from the catholic verities concerning the most holy TRINITY, to *our*

own contemplation of GOD *simply* as *our* Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. It is enough just to mention this topic, which has received of late both full discussion in the writings of the defenders of Primitive Tradition, and melancholy illustration in the conduct of some of its most strenuous opponents. And may it not be taken as an indication of the *tendency* of the theory, that the list of fundamentals, offered in exemplification of it¹, includes no express

¹ *Observations, &c.* (7—9.) “The fall of man,—the depravity of his heart and life,—his utter helplessness and consequent misery,—the love of GOD to his ungrateful creature,—the covenant of mercy which drew down the only begotten SON of the FATHER to assume our sinful nature, and to make full atonement on the Cross for offences beyond human calculation both in number and criminality,—the acceptance of this ransom by the offended Truth and Justice of the Most Holy GOD, and our free and entire discharge from the condemnation wherein the whole race of Adam is involved;—these indeed are *faithful sayings*, intimately and inseparably bound together, and can never be forgotten by him who has eagerly received them as an authoritative expansion of the *saying which is worthy of all men to be received, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners*. Such then is the Gospel, if we take a retrospective view from the comprehensive vantage ground of CHRIST’S resurrection.

“And again, regard the glorious consequences of that event. The gift of the holy and sanctifying SPIRIT was purchased by this inestimable price. He was given without measure to the SON, who bountifully bestows this rich portion on His redeemed brethren. The HOLY GHOST descends to make the message of salvation available to us, by changing our hearts and rendering us meet for the kingdom of heaven. Through Him we are united in communion with the FATHER and the SON; for His purifying and converting grace we are taught to pray, and in answer to our prayers He does form in all hearts which open to His influence the blessed tempers and dispositions particularised by our LORD, at the very outset of His ministry, in the Beatitudes. . . . The belief in the personality of this Almighty Agent, and in the reality of His regenerating work, which engrafts these blessed dispositions in the renewed soul, was established on an immovable basis in the primitive Church by His miraculous operations. Through the same SPIRIT Christian hope appropriates to itself all the inestimable treasures of the Gospel. He unites the elect people of GOD in one holy Church, to which the promises are made sure by an immutable oath: the resurrection

affirmation of the doctrine just mentioned? Is it not a list which might be accepted, as far as the letter of it goes, by an Arian or Sabellian? And this consideration is more serious, the more entirely we are convinced of the orthodoxy and judgment of the person drawing up such a confession. So much the stronger does the argument become for superseding all private opinions, even the best qualified, in the selection of fundamentals; and for acquiescing rather in the baptismal Creed, according to that interpretation of it which the Nicene Creed proves *by moral demonstration* to have been the interpretation of the apostolical times. "Of the apostolical times;" for to those in effect we appeal, when we appeal to the Nicene Fathers. We call them in as evidence, not as judges. But of this subject more will be said by and by.

In the meantime it may be well to notice one more symptom of the unconscious rationalism, in which men are involved by mistrust of primitive tradition. They dwell on single texts or propositions, enouncing some one great gospel truth, (*e. g.* the resurrection of our LORD,) as if acknowledging them were equivalent to an acknowledg-

of CHRIST our head is in certainty of consequence the resurrection of us also, His happy and privileged members. He will return from His mediatorial throne, where He is now subduing all enemies, and ordering all things for our benefit, that He may take us to Himself. But all the descendants of Adam, without exception, shall be assembled before His awful tribunal: then shall the unbelieving and impenitent be cast, body and soul, into unquenchable fire; the inscrutable mystery of GOD shall then be finished; His perfect attributes shall then be manifested and vindicated; thenceforth saints and angels shall be for ever united in one glorious family; they shall be one with their GOD and SAVIOUR and SANCTIFIER, and with each other through endless ages.

"*This, and this alone, is the Gospel; it hangs together as one perfect whole. No man can be rightly instructed in one part, who has radically erroneous views of any portion of it.*"

ment of the whole Gospel¹. And so, virtually and in reason, it is, but not practically, not in the faith of men's minds. All geometrical truths may be involved in the original axioms and definitions, but we do not therefore consider a person who has learned the two or three first pages of Euclid as actually assenting to all that is important in geometry. Now we see what fatal use will be made of this particular method of simplifying beyond what the Church has sanctioned, by the history of the school of Episcopius, Locke, and Hoadly; they set out with this aphorism, "that the one point of faith necessary to salvation was simply to believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the true Messias." What was the result? The first discarded the divinity of our LORD from his list of fundamental truths; the second, apparently, was at least an Arian²; the third denied the grace of the Sacraments. True therefore as it may be in a certain sense to say, that any one book or any one text of Scripture contains in itself, after a sort, all things necessary to eternal salvation, it is not a truth which in any way dispenses with the use of Creeds and confessions of faith; or of Tradition, if any can be produced capable of guaranteeing such documents. It is not a truth which can help us to discern fundamentals. For the question will still remain, "which among the many things implied in this comprehensive saying are needful to be really thought of and professed by all?" and the deeper and more comprehensive the proposition may be, the more is this difficulty enhanced. The appropriate use of such texts lies, not in the *selection* of fundamentals, but in their

¹ *Observations*, &c. p. 5, 11.

² See his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Works, vii. 171. ed. 1801; *Commentary on the Epistles*, viii. 122, 338.

demonstration. "Tradition," in this respect, "teaches; Scripture proves." And we ought to be very thankful to the Almighty for leaving us a tradition so complete as the Creed is, not only for our comfort, but because we are thereby spared a great and otherwise inevitable temptation to a kind of irreverence, which, as it is, proves but too inviting to many of us: the irreverence of dealing rudely with the words of the Most High, while we are handling them as the materials of a system which we are to plan out for ourselves, instead of marking them with silent reverence, as the foundations of a vast Temple, the outline whereof, so far as we can trace it, has been previously delivered into our hands by an unerring Architect.

The reader has now before him a specimen, both of the kind of *protest* which seemed desirable, on behalf of the great church principles, against the misrepresentations which commonly beset them; and also of the *cautions* most required in the examination of those principles. And if, under the latter head, for clearness' sake, and also for the sake of incidentally justifying what he had before stated, the author has illustrated his argument from the pages of those writers to whom he is unfortunately opposed in this discussion, it has not been, if he at all knows himself, from any unkind or invidious feeling, but simply because he knew no better way of pointing out the tendency of their line of argument, towards a rationalism not the less perilous to others, because they themselves are utterly unconscious of it. He charges no man with disloyalty to the Church of England, and hopes in his turn not to be so charged; convinced as he is, that the view which he humbly advocates is not only permitted, but warranted and taught, by her formularies. And, in the substantial truth of that view, for which, every day of his life, he

seems to perceive accumulating evidence, from Scripture, from Reason, and from Church History, he finds a sure ground of hope, that the earnest and (he trusts) not uncharitable, inculcation of it will not be hurtful to the Church of GOD.

Although in general the author has declined noticing, in this Postscript, objections of detail, criticisms on particular expressions, or fallacies apprehended in particular arguments; as feeling that if persons could be once set in the right way with regard to the great principles, such things might well be passed over, affecting, at most, what is of small consequence in comparison, his own credit for skill in reasoning, history, or languages; yet there are two points, on which it may be well to make an exception to that rule, by reason of their aptness to illustrate the whole subject.

One of these topics is, the state of the Canon of the New Testament implied in St. Paul's Epistles, particularly those to Timothy. The Sermon had said, "The truths and rules, committed by St. Paul to Timothy's charge, were wholly or for the most part unwritten." The expression was so far, perhaps, verbally incorrect, as it took no notice of the Old Testament, which undoubtedly formed part of the Church's *Depositum*, quite down from the day of Pentecost. But it is objected to on a different ground: viz. that at the time when these Epistles were indited, a very large proportion of the books of the New Testament was already in existence¹. The objection overlooks the fact, that the time spoken of was not the time when St. Paul was writ-

¹ *Brief Examination*, p. 28.

ing, but when Timothy received his charge, *i. e.* when he was first admitted to a portion in the Christian ministry. And that was, before St. Paul wrote the first Epistle to the Thessalonians; as is probable, by the opening of that epistle, where Timothy joins with St. Paul and Silas in a solemn benediction to the Church; and evident, from the following passage: “We sent Timotheus, our brother, and a minister of God, and a fellow-worker with us in the Gospel of CHRIST¹.” Now the date of that epistle lies between A.D. 51 and A.D. 53. And Mr. Greswell, with great probability, assigns to the year 52, or thereabouts, the first appearance both of St. Mark’s Gospel, and of the Greek of that of St. Matthew. In short, with the exception of the Hebrew original of St. Matthew, the first epistle to the Thessalonians seems to be generally considered by learned men as the earliest portion of the whole Christian Scriptures. That the Thessalonians, at least, had no other part of the New Testament as yet in their hands, may not improbably be argued, perhaps, from a verse in the second epistle, “Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have received, whether by word or our epistle.” This does not seem a natural way of writing, if they possessed any Gospel or Epistle besides, of equal authority with the letter which St. Paul had sent. Yet if St. Paul or Timothy knew of any such, we should naturally expect them to have communicated it to the Thessalonians; who seem to have been as worthy of such a boon as any converts could be, by their simple and affectionate faith; and whose condition as new converts, early bereft of their spiritual fathers, and exposed to much persecution and insult, called for all the comfort and

¹ 1 Thess. iii. 2.

aid which such memorials were apt to afford. Again, if St. Paul knew not as yet either St. Matthew's Gospel, or St. Mark's, (for to them the question is nearly confined), it is hardly conceivable that either could have been made public over any considerable part of the existing Church. For to whom could such a document have been known sooner than to the learned and vigilant Apostle of the Gentiles? It follows that both the charge delivered to Timothy, and the faith in which the Thessalónians were instructed, were "almost or wholly unwritten," excepting always so much as was contained in the books of the Old Testament. Those books, indeed, Timothy had known "from a child," and they were "able to make him wise unto salvation:" but then it was "through faith that was in CHRIST JESUS:" *i. e.* by the help of that key to their true meaning, which the history and doctrine of CHRIST, written or unwritten, afforded to considerate believers.

The argument therefore is in a great measure independent of the exact number of books supposed to be written before such and such an epistle. It is sufficient on the question of date that the gospel of St. John, allowed to be doctrinally one of the most important portions of the Bible, was later than all St. Paul's writings; and that St. Paul, in writings of several dates, speaks of the *παρακαταθηκῆ*, or *depositum*, as of a standard or measure complete in itself, and completely within reach of those whom he was addressing. The gradual accumulation of the treasures of the New Testament was going on all the while, but, as a standard of doctrine, was rather a provision for future ages, than a necessary supply of any want then existing. The case has been compared, not unaptly, to that ingenious contrivance of modern machinery, by which two metals, expanding under opposite temperatures, are

arranged so as that the shrinking of the one shall be compensated by the dilating of the other, whereby on the whole the same effect is produced. Thus when exact tradition, of all at least but fundamental doctrine ¹, would have become gradually more uncertain, its place was providentially supplied by the Canon of Scripture becoming fixed, and thoroughly known all over the Christian world. An effect mainly perhaps attributable (among second causes) to the operation of the great Church principle, that necessary doctrines must all be proveable from Scripture. Bishop Taylor gives a remarkable instance of the process here alluded to. It is quoted here, not as altogether accurate, but as throwing light both on the general argument, and on that great writer's opinion. "Because the books of Scripture were not all written at once, nor at once communicated, nor at once received; therefore the Churches of GOD at first were forced to trust their memories, and to try the doctrines by appealing to the memories of others; *i. e.* to the consenting report, and faith delivered and preached to other Churches, especially the chiefest, where the memory of the Apostles was recent and permanent. The mysteriousness of CHRIST'S priesthood, the perfection of his sacrifice, and the unity of it, CHRIST'S advocacy and intercession for us in heaven, might very well be accounted traditions, before St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews was admitted for canonical; but now they are written truths, and if they had not been written, it is likely we should have lost them. But this way could not long be necessary, and could not long be safe ²."

¹ Fundamentals were secured, *perhaps*, by the Creed: *i. e.* in substance, though not in evidence.

² *Works*, vol. x. p. 425.

Nay, and we have higher testimony yet to appeal to. St. Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus expressly for this end, that it might be a "document of proof;" not to supersede the catechetical instructions (*i. e.* in other words, the traditions) of the Church, but to make us all (*ἐπιγινῶναι*) know more firmly than ever, *τὴν ἀσφαλείαν*, the absolute certainty of those elementary truths, wherein we, in common with Theophilus, have been instructed, and which we, by the Gospel history, may clearly discern to have come down from heaven. In all this there is nothing to contradict, but much surely to favour, the notion that Christians never were designed to be left to collect each his own Gospel out of the Scriptures by the unbiassed exercise of private judgment¹. And so far as it can be shown by any thing like decisive evidence, that we have in our Creeds substantially the same catechetical truths which Theophilus had been taught, so far we are the very persons for whose immediate use St. Luke wrote, and must of course come to the reading of his Gospel with a great advantage over those who consider themselves bound not only to *confirm* but to *discover*.

But here comes in the second question of detail, on which it seemed desirable to touch; the question, in what sense, and in what measure, the Nicene Creed was traditional rather than scriptural.

Now the method of proceeding at Nicæa appears to have been nearly as follows: Each Bishop was required to rehearse the faith which he and his church professed, and into which they were baptized. In those statements when nothing appeared of the peculiar views of Arius, but all, on the contrary, with seventeen or eighteen exceptions,

¹ Compare on St. Luke's Preface, Dr. Hawkins on *Unauthoritative Tradition*, p. 35, 36.

agreed substantially in the orthodox interpretation, and shrank, with religious horror, from the first sound of the new doctrine; the burthen of proof was of course thrown on the heresiarch, and he was required to make good his theory by allegations from Scripture; which he endeavoured to do, availing himself also to the utmost of his own skill in philosophy and dialectics. But his allegations being overthrown by large arguments from Scripture itself, the orthodox creed was considered as sufficiently established. However, to seal the doctrine for ever against the like or more plausible misconstruction, the orthodox traditional interpretation was incorporated into a written creed: being first thoroughly vindicated, both in the substance and wording of it, and also in the annexed anathema¹, by reasoning out of Holy Writ. The result was, the Nicene Creed with its anathema. In that document, therefore, we have two points clearly made out; first, the substance of the baptismal Creed of those times; and secondly, the tradition then received on the sense and importance of the disputed article. These two complete the Creed as a formula; and therefore, *as a formula*, it may be truly said to have its origin, not from Scripture but from tradition: and yet it is quite necessary that every word of it should be proveable from Holy Scripture, and quite certain that all was so proved, with most religious care, in the first instance.

¹ The anathema originally annexed to the Nicene Creed, and answering in its ecclesiastical use to the severe monitory clauses of the Athanasian Creed in the Church of England, is as follows:—"Those who say, 'There was a time when He was not,' and, 'Before He was begotten He was not,' and, 'He came into being from among things non-existent, or of some other substance or being,'—those who affirm that the SON of GOD is 'created,' or 'mutable,' or 'alterable,'—are hereby anathematized by the Holy Catholic and Apostolical Church." See Theodoret, *E. H.* i. 12; St. Athanas. *ad Jovian.* t. i. 781; Concil. Harduin. i. 444; Socr. i. 8. p. 23.

As to the fact that such were the proceedings of the council, it may not, perhaps, be set down in so many words by any historian; but it is capable of being established by circumstantial evidence of the strongest kind. First, there is the general presumption in favour of it. What would all men—what should we ourselves—do under the like circumstances? Would it be natural to discard all reference to Creeds, and Catechisms, and Articles, and Liturgies, out of “an earnest desire to draw all things unto the determination of bare and naked Scripture¹?” To come with minds altogether blank to the study of the Bible, as to the cultivation of a field which no one had ever yet laboured in? For example, suppose a convocation now called to settle this very point, what degree of deference is due to primitive tradition; would the received formularies of the Church of England be left entirely out of the question? Nay, already, in the present controversy, a certain tradition—*i. e.* the Thirty-nine Articles—has been alleged² as a decisive touchstone of the truth as well as importance of whatever may be taught by a member of the English Church. Whether the allegation in the particular instance were altogether just and adequate, or no, still it seems to indicate, that even the opponents of tradition, had they been present at Nicæa, might have been led to make considerable use of it.

But let us see what the history of the council contains, to confirm or disappoint this our natural expectation. Is there any thing in the line taken by those most influential in the council, before the proceedings commenced, which may help us in judging of the course they would be most likely to pursue afterwards? The public document, by

¹ Hooker, *E. P.* ii. 7. 1.

² *Brief Examination*, p. 57.

which the peril arising from Arianism was first made known to the Church generally, was the circular letter of Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria, signed also by his clergy, to the Bishops of every diocese¹. Now in that letter the line taken is analogous to what is here supposed. First he states against Arius, according to Tertullian's rule in such cases, the *præscriptio*, or preliminary exception, arising from the novelty of his doctrines. "Who," says he, "ever heard such things²? or who now hearing them is not astonished, and stoppeth his ears, that the contamination of these words may not touch his hearing?" These are not mere rhetorical exclamations; as is proved by a comparison with a passage of Athanasius, which begins with the same saying: a saying which indeed appears to have grown into a watchword among the Catholics. "*Who ever heard of such things*³? Whence or from whom did the parasites or bribed partisans of the heresy hear such things? Who, when they were catechumens, spake such things to them? Who told them, 'Leave your worship of the creature, and draw near again to worship a being created and made.' Now if they themselves confess that they have now for the first time heard such things, let them not deny that this heresy is a stranger and not of the Fathers. But that which is not of the Fathers, but just now invented, what other character can it have than such as St. Paul foretold: 'In the latter times some shall depart from the sound faith?'" Alexander's view may be further understood by his letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople, of the same name, in which the order of the topics is indeed inverted, but the substance of the reasoning is exactly the same⁴. The occasion of the letter being to announce the

¹ St. Athanas. i. 397.² *τις γὰρ ἤκουσε πώποτε τοιαῦτα ;*³ St. Athanas. i. 412. C ; cf. 902. B.⁴ Ap. Theodoret E. H. i. 3.

excommunication of Arius, he was led first to give some account of the Arian errors, on which naturally followed a refutation of them out of Scripture: but that being ended, the holy Bishop was not willing to conclude without a distinct enunciation of his own and his church's faith, conceived in such terms, and with such arrangement, as evidently show it to be a paraphrase on the baptismal or apostolical Creed then in use at Alexandria. "Concerning which things we so believe, as seemeth meet to the apostolical Church: In one unbegotten FATHER and in one Lord JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten SON of GOD and besides this religious opinion concerning the FATHER and SON, as the sacred Scriptures teach, we confess one HOLY GHOST one only Catholic Church, the apostolical one, and after this we acknowledge the resurrection from the dead, the first fruits whereof was our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who assumed the body really, and not in appearance only, of Mary the mother of GOD: who, in the end of the world, to put away sin, sojourned among the race of mankind; who was crucified and died, and rose again from the dead, and was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of Majesty These things we teach, these we preach, these are the apostolical doctrines of the Church, for the sake of which also we die, not regarding those who would force us to disavow them, even though they compel us by torments; not drawing back from the hope which is in them."

Thus much may suffice to show the opinion of the venerable Alexander concerning the best way of dealing with the controversy which led to the Nicene Council. But there is another person, St. Athanasius, whose judgment on the same point would go near to determine the question: it being well known that for all the inferiority

of his rank (for he was then only a deacon in the Alexandrian Church) he exercised a principal influence on the tone and course of the deliberations at Nicæa. Now St. Athanasius more than once mentions a certain "form or stamp" ¹ of the faith of a Christian, *χαρακτῆρα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ*, by recurrence to which doctrines may be best tried, and heresy repressed; and this form or stamp, he says, we receive by tradition, but are able to demonstrate it by the Scriptures ². Thus, speaking of the Arian misinterpretation of the text in Proverbs, rendered by the LXX., "The LORD created me to be the chief of His ways," he remarks as follows ³: "The heretic will say, Is it not so written? It is so written, and so expressed with the highest reason; but that which is well said, the heretics understand ill. For if they had perceived and known the very Form (*χαρακτῆρα*) of Christianity, they would not have said that the LORD of glory is a creature, nor have stumbled at the good words of Scripture. But they do not know, nor understand; therefore, as it is written, they walk in darkness. Nevertheless, it is right for us to explain this point, that their folly may be made manifest in this respect also, and that we may not leave out that which is the proper test to be employed against their impiety; perhaps too that themselves may come to a better mind. The very form then of the faith in CHRIST is this ⁴: That

¹ *Χαρακτήρ* properly means the image impressed by a seal; and is transferred to any thing which is originated by and accurately represents another thing. Cf. Heb. i. 3.

² Ep. ad Adolph. t. i. 914. E. Ἡμῶν δὲ ἡ πίστις ἐστὶν ὀρθή, καὶ ἐκ διδασκαλίας ἀποστολικῆς ὁρμωμένη καὶ παραδόσεως τῶν πατέρων, βεβαιουμένη ἐκ τε νέας καὶ παλαιᾶς διαθήκης.

³ i. 688. B.

⁴ Ὁ χαρακτήρ τοίνυν τῆς ἐν ΧΡΙΣΤΩΙ πίστεως ἐστὶν οὗτος· τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ΘΕΟΥ, κ. τ. λ.

the SON, the WORD of GOD, being GOD, (for ‘in the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was GOD,’) being the Wisdom and Power of the FATHER, (for ‘CHRIST is the Power of GOD and the Wisdom of GOD,’) that He, I say, in the end of the world, was made man for our salvation; (for John himself having said, ‘In the beginning was the WORD,’ a little below said, ‘And the WORD was made flesh;’ as much as to say, He was made man). and having become man, and taken order for all things that appertained to Him as man, and having subdued and abolished our enemy, Death, sitteth now at the right hand of the FATHER, in whom He is, the FATHER being also in Him, as it was always, and is for ever. Now, this Form is from the Apostles through the Fathers¹. For the rest, it is the duty of a reader of the Scripture to search and distinguish, when it speaks of the Godhead of the WORD, when, on the other hand, of His human attributes; that we may not err, taking the one for the other, which is the case of the Arians.” The same principle he more briefly expresses, though without the term *χαρακτήρ τοῦ χριστιανισμοῦ*, in arguing against a refined form of heresy, the professing, namely, to abstract from all thoughts of our LORD’s human nature in our worship of His person: concerning which, having shown that it must end in the denial of the Incarnation, he adds², “To the Heathen and Jews let us leave such madness and desperation; but to us belongs the right faith, *setting out* from the apostolical teaching and tradition of the Fathers, and *confirmed* both by the New and the Old Testament.” Could he have said more clearly, “Tradition teaches, Scripture proves?”

¹ Ὁ μὲν χαρακτήρ οὗτος ἐκ τῶν Ἀποστόλων διὰ τῶν πατέρων· δεῖ δὲ λοιπὸν, ἐντυγχάνοντα τῇ γραφῇ, δοκιμάζειν καὶ διακρίνειν, κ. τ. λ.

² T. i. 914. E.

What is more, and yet nearer to our point, this same "Form of the Faith," for which, as we have seen, Athanasius looked to tradition, he affirms elsewhere to have been the very drift and scope of the Fathers in drawing up the Nicene Creed: and he himself, be it still remembered, had been among the foremost in that work. "This council¹," says he, "in Nicæa, is truly a pillar set up with an inscribed warning against every kind of heresy. In this, such also as blaspheme against the HOLY GHOST, and call Him a creature, may find their refutation. For the Fathers, having spoken concerning faith in the SON, added presently, 'We believe also in the HOLY GHOST;' that professing the full and perfect faith in the Holy TRINITY, they might thereby make known *the Form of the Faith in CHRIST*, τὸν χαρακτῆρα τῆς ἐν ΧΡΙΣΤΩΙ πίστεως, and the teaching of the Catholic Church. For it hath become manifest among you, and among all, and no Christian can have in his mind any doubt on this point; that our faith is not in the creature, but in GOD the FATHER Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible; and in one LORD JESUS CHRIST, His only-begotten SON; and in one HOLY GHOST: one GOD, Him who is known in the holy and perfect Trinity: into which faith having been baptized, and therein united to the Deity, we trust also to inherit the kingdom of heaven through JESUS CHRIST our LORD."

¹ Ep. ad Afros, t. i. 899. D. Αὕτη γὰρ ἡ ἐν Νικαία σύνοδος, ἀληθῶς στηλογραφία κατὰ πάσης αἰρέσεώς ἐστιν· αὕτη καὶ τοὺς βλασφημοῦντας εἰς τὸ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ τὸ ἍΓΙΟΝ, καὶ λέγοντας αὐτὸ κτίσμα, ἀνατρέπεν· εἰρηκότες γὰρ οἱ πατέρες περὶ τῆς εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν πίστεως, ἐπήγαγον εὐθὺς· πιστεύομεν καὶ εἰς τὸ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ τὸ ἍΓΙΟΝ· ἵνα τελείαν καὶ πλήρη τὴν εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Τριάδα πίστιν ὁμολογησάντες, ΤΟΝ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΑ ΤΗΣ ἘΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩΙ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ, καὶ τὴν διδασκαλίαν τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐν τούτῳ γνωρίσωσι.

These passages put together seem to afford full and unexceptionable testimony as to the *principle* acted on at Nicæa. But it may be satisfactory to show, in one or two more cases, how completely this great theologian had made up his mind, that such was the only way of dealing with heretics. To Epictetus, Bishop of Corinth, who had transmitted to him certain heads of heretical opinions touching the person of our LORD, he gives the following advice, almost in the tone of reproof. “These¹, it seems, were the subjects on which they were debating and contending with each other—the very persons who vaunt themselves in the confession of the Fathers, drawn up at Nicæa. But I, for my part, am inclined to wonder how Your Piety could endure them; and that you did not at once silence them uttering such words, and confront them with the Creed of the true religion; in order that on hearing it they might either hold their peace, or speaking against it, might be accounted as heretics. For the things above-mentioned were never spoken nor heard among Christians, but are altogether foreign to the teaching of the Apostles. This is the reason why I (if I may allege myself as authority) have caused their sayings, as they appear above, to be simply transcribed in my letter: so that any one who does but hear them, may perceive the shamefulness and impiety which is in them. And though it were necessary more at large to censure and expose the folly of such theorists, yet it were well that the letter should stop here, and no more be set down in writing. For things so evidently betraying their own vileness ought not to have any further labour or inquiry bestowed on them, lest those who are disputatious begin to think they

¹ T. i. 903. B.

admit of a question. Or it may be right to reply to such words so far only as to say, ‘It is enough that these things belong not to the Catholic Church, neither was this the mind of the Fathers.’ Yet, lest through our entire silence the inventors of evil provide themselves with an excuse for their shamelessness, it may be well to rehearse a few places from the divine Scriptures, for the chance that being so put to shame they may cease from these their unclean imaginings.” In like manner, arguing against Apollinarius, his first challenge is ¹, *πόθεν ὑμῖν κατηγορήλαθη*; “Tell me, ye inventors of the new Gospel according to yourselves, (which is not another) *from what quarter* was it announced to you, that you should call the flesh [of our LORD] uncreated?” This emphatic question is asked after allegation of the Creed of Nicæa, (i. e. of the embodied tradition of the Church,) and comparison of the errors in question with it.

Proceeding to the few details which remain of what took place in the council, we find nothing to contradict and much to strengthen the idea, that not only St. Athanasius’s doctrine, but also his mode of establishing it, was there sanctioned. One slight indication of this may seem to be afforded by an anecdote which Sozomen ² (among others) has preserved. The Bishops, having arrived at Nicæa a few days before the opening of the council, had many conferences among themselves, (to which, it seems, Arius was also admitted,) on the best way of conducting the debate. “Some were for discouraging all innovation on the faith delivered down from the beginning; those especially whose simplicity of character taught them,

¹ I. 923. E.

² Lib. ii. § 17, 18. p. 431. Ed. Vales.

without nice inquiry, to accept the faith in God. Others were peremptory, that it was wrong without trial to follow after the more ancient opinions." In a word, the question lay between traditive and private interpretation. Which of the two prevailed, Sozomen does not expressly say; but he does say, that this preliminary discussion proved an effectual trial of the skill of the principal debaters on each side; and that from that time St. Athanasius, being there in attendance on Alexander, obtained the lead in the proceedings of the council. This does not look as if Athanasius had failed in the preliminary debate; and we know which side he must have taken in it. Moreover, Sozomen goes on to record, in immediate connection with this discussion, the well known anecdote of the aged and unlearned confessor, who silenced a pagan disputer, present at the council, by the bare recital of his baptismal Creed, adding these few sentences: " 'That these things are so, we believe without nice inquiry. Do not thou, then, labour in vain, seeking confutations of those who are exact in faith; and how it was or was not possible for these things to take place; but answer my question at once: Believest thou?' Upon this the philosopher, astounded, replies, 'I believe;' and, avowing his gratitude for his defeat, came over to the old man's opinions: and recommended to those who before felt with him to be of the same mind: affirming with an oath, that not without divine influence had this change taken place in him, but that he was urged to become a Christian by some ineffable power." Whether this account be correct in detail or no, that something of the kind took place is clear from the parallel report of Socrates¹. "A little before

¹ I. 8. p. 20. D.

the assembling of the Bishops in council, the professors of disputation were exercising themselves beforehand in argument with whomsoever they met; and many found their reasoning attractive and pleasant. But a certain confessor, a layman, of a simple mind, opposes himself to the logicians, and says to them, CHRIST and His Apostles taught us not an art of disputation, nor any vain deceit, but a simple doctrine, the guard of which is faith and good works. On his so speaking, all who were present marvelled and received the saying: and the disputers, thinking better of it, remained quiet, the simple word of truth having been brought to their ears. The very next day the Bishops assembled." Not to dwell on the possibility that here is something of a divine sanction given to the appeal to antiquity which our argument supposes; even the lowest statement, that of Socrates, (who had the evidence of an eye-witness to this among other things that passed at Nicæa¹;) implies a decided preference there given to traditional over private interpretations. It shows what bias the Fathers were under the day before the council was holden.

There is another anecdote, still better accredited, which indicates the esteem in which the argument from antiquity was held among the orthodox at that time. The Novatianist Prelate in Constantinople, Acesius, being present at the Council, though not allowed to take part in it, was asked by the emperor, after the publication of the Creed, whether he also consented to this faith. "He replied, 'It is no new matter, O emperor, which the synod hath determined; for so from of old, from the beginning, even

¹ Socr. i. 10. p. 39.

from the times of the Apostles, I have received the definition of the faith¹.”

In the actual session, the council having been first opened by speeches from Eustathius, the Patriarch of Antioch, and the emperor Constantine, the next proceeding is related, by that Patriarch himself², in these words: “When the question was put concerning the mode of faith, there was produced that paper, which, containing in it the blasphemy of Eusebius [of Nicomedia], was, in fact, a manifest conviction [of the same], which, being read before all, caused at first hearing inconceivable grief to the audience, τῆς ἐκτροπῆς ἕνεκα, *on* account of its great deviation; and brought incurable disgrace upon the writer.” This shows that a confession of faith was required from the innovators at least; and that, according to the statement of St. Athanasius quoted in the Sermon, it was met with a burst of censure at first hearing, as new and perverse.

But we have also a letter of Eusebius the historian³, tending to throw light on the mode of proceeding. It is addressed to certain upholders of the new opinions, and purports to explain the part which he, Eusebius, had taken in subscribing the Creed of the Homoöusion. “I have sent you herewith,” he says, “as the case required, first the written statement which I offered concerning the faith, afterwards the other, which they have published, with certain additions of their own to my expressions. My formula then, read in the presence of our gracious sovereign, and approved as good and genuine, stands thus.

¹ Socr. i. 10. p. 38; Soz. i. 22. p. 436; Gelasius ap. Concil. i. 425.

² Ap. Theodoret. i. 7. Ὡς δὲ ἐζητήτο τῆς πίστεως ὁ τρόπος, κ. τ. λ.

³ Ap. Theodoret. i. 11; Socr. i. 8. p. 23; St. Athanas. i. 238.

‘As we have received from the Bishops before us, in our first catechetical instruction, and when we were baptized ; as also we have learned out of the divine Scriptures, and (what is more) as we have both believed and taught in our offices of Presbyter and Bishop, so now also believing, we offer unto you our faith. We believe in one God,’ &c.¹” (reciting the substance, and almost the words of the Nicene Creed, with the exception of the Homoöusion.) Having afterwards accounted for his reception of those clauses which were added at Nicæa, he finishes by declaring that he had assented to nothing which did not “appear evidently to concur with the confession which he had just made in the fore-recited formula.” This proves that Eusebius, at any rate, in any confession made or statement allowed by him at Nicæa, had respect to his baptismal Creed, and to the traditionary explanation of it received in his Church. He takes that as his groundwork, and appeals to the Scriptures for his proof. Now Eusebius was not a very likely person to adopt this mode of his own accord. It is well known that he delighted, perhaps to excess, in the exercise of his own learning and acuteness ; that he was more apt to idolize talent than antiquity ; and that his name has consequently become associated, whether justly or no, with a most dangerous kind of rationalism. So much the more probable is it, that he was guided in this instance by the general voice or feeling of the council.

¹ Καθὼς παρελάβομεν παρὰ τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν ἐπισκόπων, ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ κατηχήσει καὶ ὅτε τὸ λουτρὸν ἐλαμβάνομεν, καθὼς καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραφῶν μεμαθήκαμεν, καὶ ὡς ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἐπισκοπῇ ἐπιστεύομεν τε καὶ ἐδιδάσκομεν, οὕτω καὶ νῦν πιστεύοντες, τὴν ἡμετέραν πίστιν προαναφέρομεν, κ. τ. λ.

These things being well considered, it may perhaps not unreasonably be thought, that the custom which afterwards prevailed, of opening Church councils with a formal profession of faith, had its origin, or at least found sanction, in the proceedings at Nicæa. The Preface to the Arabic Version of the Nicene Canons, as translated by Bishop Beveridge, states that “the Confessions (*professiones*), discourses, and sentences of the several holy Fathers [there assembled], were preserved in fifteen books¹.” The document referred to is most probably apocryphal; still there was evidently a tradition as to the form of their proceedings, agreeing in substance with what has now been advanced. Some centuries further back, (A. D. *circ.* 830,) Isidorus Mercator had inserted in the Preface to his Edition of the Councils² a kind of formulary for the holding of a synod; one of the directions of which is, that as soon as the synod has been regularly opened, “*collatio pariter et instructio de mysterio sanctæ Trinitatis habebitur, simulque et ordinibus officiorum, si in omnium sedibus ejusdem celebritatis unitas teneatur:*” *i. e.*, “A comparison and explanation shall take place concerning the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and also concerning the orders which relate to [ecclesiastical] offices: [to ascertain] whether or no unity be maintained in all the sees of the aforesaid assembly.” And a little below, that “on the three days of solemn supplication, with which the synod is to open, there shall be no business transacted, *nisi sola collatio de mysterio Sacrosanctæ Trinitatis, et de ordinibus sacris, vel officiorum institutis; ex-*

¹ Concil. Harduin. i. 526. E.

² Ibid. Præf. Isid. Merc. p. 7. B. C. Compare the Note at the end of this Postscript.

cepting the comparison [before mentioned] concerning the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and concerning sacred orders, or regulations of offices.”

Reverting to the course taken in particular councils: of what passed at the second general synod at Constantinople, A. D. 381, we have no detailed account. The council, in their report to the emperor Theodosius II., state themselves to have first renewed their concord, *ὁμονοίαν*, with one another¹; which word *Concord* might seem to relate to their settlement of the disputes then existing about the see of Constantinople: but the narration of Socrates² shows that the comparison of doctrinal views preceded that arrangement; and in the course of it he twice uses the word to denote their consent in the orthodox faith. At all events; they have left it on record, that their adherence to the Nicene Creed was not without reference to the witness of the Church in all ages concerning the Creed of the apostolical times. “Whether it be persecutions, or afflictions, or threats from our sovereign, or cruelties from persons in office, or any other trial, which we have endured from the heretics, we endured it on behalf of the evangelical faith, as ratified in Nicæa by the three hundred and eighteen Fathers. For this must needs find acceptance, both with you and with us,” (they are addressing their brethren, the Bishops of the Church Universal,) “and with all who pervert not the word of the true faith: being most ancient, and suitable to our Baptism, and teaching us to believe in the Name of the FATHER and of the SON and of the HOLY GHOST³.”

¹ Conc. Harduin. i. 808. B.

² Lib. v. c. 8. p. 265.

³ Concil. i. 825; Theodoret. E. H. v. 9. Ἡμεῖς γὰρ εἴτε διωγμοῦς, εἴτε θλίψεις, εἴτε βασιλικὰς ἀπειλάς, εἴτε τὰς τῶν ἀρχόντων ὀμότητας,

The Nicene Creed, as enlarged at Constantinople, came, it seems, presently to be regarded as so complete a symbol of sound doctrine, that it superseded in general all necessity for a confession, to be made by each several Bishop, of the belief of himself and his church, at the first meeting of a council. Thus at Ephesus¹, professing to observe the exact order of the canons, they entered on the doctrinal discussion by a solemn recitation of that Creed; "in order that all that might be said concerning the faith being compared with that exposition, such sayings as harmonized therewith might be received, and such as varied therefrom rejected." The expression of opinion at Chalcedon was still more remarkable. In the first session the emperor's commissioners proposed to begin the proceedings of the second by a written confession of faith on the part of the several Bishops². "Let each boldly set down his faith in writing, having the fear of God before his eyes; with the understanding that our sovereign's own faith is guided by the confessions of the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Fathers, and the canonical epistles and expositions of the holy Fathers, Gregory, Basil, Athanasius, Hilary, Ambrose, and the canonical epistles of Cyril, which were read at Ephesus." Two days after, in the second ses-

εἶτε τινα πειρασμὸν ἕτερόν παρὰ τῶν αἰρετικῶν ὑπεμείναμεν, ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς πίστεως, τῆς ἐν Νικαίᾳ τῆς Βιθυνίας παρὰ τῶν τινῶν πατέρων κυρωθείσης, ὑπέστημεν ταύτην γὰρ καὶ ὑμῖν καὶ ἡμῖν καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς μὴ διαστρέφουσι τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθοῦς πίστεως συναρέσκειν δεῖ, πρεσβυτάτην οὖσαν, καὶ ἀκόλουθον τῷ βαπτίσματι, καὶ διδάσκουσαν ἡμᾶς πιστεῦειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ΠΑΤΡΟΣ, καὶ τοῦ ΥἱΟΥ, καὶ τοῦ Ἀγίου ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ.

Concil. i. 1361. E.

² Ibid. ii. 273. A.

sion, they renewed their proposition¹. "The point," they said, "which now demands our inquiry, judgment, and serious attention, is the reinforcement of the true faith. *That*, more than any thing else, is the object of the synod. Knowing, then, that to GOD Himself you will give account each for his own soul, and also for us all,—who desire to be rightly instructed in Christianity, and to have all doubt taken away by the concord and consent, and harmonious exposition and teaching, of the venerable Fathers,—give diligence without fear, favour or dislike, to set out the faith in its purity: so that those also, who, compared with the general body, appear to be otherwise minded, may, by acknowledgment of the truth, be brought back to unanimity." To this, the Bishops replied by acclamation, "Other exposition [of the faith] no man maketh, nor do we endeavour nor dare to put forth any; for the Fathers have taught us, and the things set forth by them are preserved in writing; contrary to these we have no power to say any thing." The acclamation was repeated more than once: "We make no fresh confession in writing: the canon forbids it: the old confession is enough: let the rules of the Fathers prevail:" which Florentius, Bishop of Sardis, enforced by the strong reason, that "it was not possible for them to write hastily on the faith, taught as they were to obey the holy Nicene council, and that which was rightly and religiously assembled at Ephesus." Then was recited the Nicene Creed; whereupon their acclamation was²: "This we all believe; in this we were baptized,—in this we baptize. . . . this is the true faith; this is the holy faith; this

¹ Concil. ii. 284, 5.

² Ibid. 288. A.

is the eternal faith . . . thus we believe, every one of us.”

A reference to the councils would show other examples of the like especial deference paid to the Creed of Nicæa, as ratified by the four synods above mentioned¹. One more only shall be here mentioned. The assembly at Trent, in their third session and first decree concerning the faith, “decrees and determines before all to begin by this confession of their faith; following herein, as they say, the examples of the Fathers, who, in their more venerable councils, when commencing business, have been wont to hold out this, as their shield against all heresies whatsoever².” Well had it been for them and for us, had they followed antiquity as religiously in all things!

So far, then, as the practice of other councils affords any presumption of what was done at Nicæa, we should expect to find that the Fathers looked in the first place to their Creeds before acknowledged, which as yet, perhaps, were mostly unwritten³; and did not set themselves, as though hitherto destitute of formularies, to the compiling of an entirely new one by their own judgment out of the Scriptures. And this expectation is confirmed by the substance of the Creed itself: which every child must perceive to be substantially the same formula with the old baptismal

¹ E. g. 2 Constantinop. t. iii. 70; 3 Tolet. t. iii. 471; Emerit. iii. 999; 11 Tolet. iii. 1019; 3 Bracarens. iii. 1031; 3 Constantinop. iii. 1060, &c.

² Concil. t. x. 20.

³ Compare St. Hilary writing to the bishops of Gaul: “Blessed are ye in the LORD, and glorious, who, retaining the perfect apostolical faith in the confession of the inward conscience, to this hour know nothing of written professions of faith.” De Synodis, c. 63. p. 1187. Ed. Bened.

Creed,—the Creed of the Apostles¹,—only expanded in the two points which specially required it. And as to those additions and explanations, they were indeed most carefully and reverentially *proved* from Scripture, yet even in them the Fathers went to Church Tradition² for the critical and decisive phrase, “of One Substance with the FATHER;” on which we have ever since mainly depended, as constituting one of our best securities against the profane conformity of heretics in heart.

These, and similar considerations, have appeared heretofore to learned men so decisive, that they have not scrupled to make such affirmations as the following³: “That ecclesiastical tradition, which Vincentius Lirinensis so much commends, did especially consist in the confessions or registers of particular Churches. Now the unanimous consent of so many several Churches as *exhibited their confessions to the Nicene council*, being not dependent one of another, was a pregnant argument to any impartial understanding man, that this faith, wherein they all agreed, had been delivered unto them by the Apostles and their followers.” And again⁴: “The unanimous consent of so many distinct visible Churches, as *exhibited their several confessions, catechisms, or testimonies of their own and their forefathers’ faith, unto the four first Œcumenical councils*, was an argument of the same force and efficacy against Arius and other

¹ See the Creeds of Alexander and Eusebius, as quoted before; and compare the accounts given by Tertullian and Irenæus; and Bp. Bull, *Jud. Eccl. Cathol.*, &c. § 4, 5, 6; with Grabe’s annotation.

² St. Ath. i. 230. *De Decr. Nic. Syn.* §. 25—27.

Jackson’s *Works*, iii. 392.

⁴ *Ibid.*

heretics, for whose conviction those councils were called, as the general consent and practice of all nations in worshipping some divine power or other, hath been in all ages against the Atheists. . . . Nothing, besides the evidence of truth delivered unto the Christian world by CHRIST and His Apostles, would have kept so many several Churches as *communicated their confessions* to the councils of Nice and Ephesus, &c., in the unity of the same faith." Hear, again, Leslie, speaking of the provincial synod, which prepared the way for the proceedings at Nicæa. "This was the method taken in the council called at Alexandria against Arius; it was asked by Alexander, the Archbishop who presided, *Quis unquam talia audivit?*—'who ever heard of this doctrine before?' And it being answered by all the Bishops there assembled in the negative, it was concluded a novel doctrine, and contrary to what had been universally received in the Christian Church. Thus every doctrine may be reduced to fact: for it is purely fact, whether such doctrine was received or not¹." Bishop Taylor says²: "It is not certain that the Nicene Fathers at their meeting recited any other Creed than the apostolical:" assuming that they recited some Creed.

And after all, though some doubt were still thought to hang on the exact order of their deliberations, their general rule is surely expressed, with sufficient plainness, and on unexceptionable testimony, in the three following passages of St. Athanasius. First, of the instinctive and inevitable comparison which the new doctrines underwent with those before received, he writes: "Who³, on hearing

¹ See below, *Catena Patrum*, No. iii. p. 102.

² X. 462.

³ *Orat. ii. contr. Arian. i. 502. B.*

the word SON, does not conceive in his mind the thought of identity of substance with the FATHER? Who, when he learned in his first Catechism, that GOD has a SON, and made all things by His own WORD, did not so receive it in his mind as we now understand it? Who, at the first origin of the impure heresy of the Arians, was not presently astounded at the mere hearing of their words, as at persons uttering strange things, and sowing a new seed, contrary to the Word sown in the beginning." Secondly, he presents the Creed to the emperor Jovian, not merely as the judgment of the present Church on the meaning of the Scriptures, but rather as her testimony to the fact, that "this faith had all along been known to all in the Church, being learned and read out of the divine Scriptures. For in this the saints, being perfected, endured martyrdom, and now are at rest in the LORD. And this faith would have continued throughout unimpaired, but for the wickedness of certain heretics, who have dared to pervert it . . . although our Fathers lost no time in assembling at Nicæa, and pronouncing the anathema on them. But the faith of the Catholic Church they professed in writing; so that by the proclaiming thereof everywhere, the heresy might be quenched which the perverse disputers had kindled¹." Lastly, in respect of those portions of the Creed which appeared in some sense new, he is careful to show that for these also they had authority from antiquity, as well as proof from holy Scripture (thus acting on the very principle laid down in the English canon of 1571, to which reference has before been made): "The Fathers," says he, "inserted the clause of the SON'S consubstantiality with the FATHER,

¹ I. 780.

and anathematised those who affirmed a diversity of substance, not in terms which they had framed for themselves, but which they too had learned from the Fathers before them which being so, the Creed of Nicæa is sufficient, agreeing as it does also with the ancient Bishops ¹." This shows in what light the framers of the Creed wished it to be viewed; and that the Church did so receive it, the words of Epiphanius (among others) may serve to testify: "They ² professed the faith of the Fathers, orthodox and unswerving, and delivered down to us from the Apostles and Prophets."

Now if St. Athanasius and the Nicene Fathers were thus earnest and constant in resorting to tradition, in order to decide among conflicting interpretations of Scripture, and settle the fundamentals of our most holy faith; that circumstance alone is a sufficient answer to the suspicion, that reliance on Primitive Tradition leads of course to disparagement of Scripture. For certainly, if there be one among divines, ancient and modern, who commits his cause to the witness of Scripture more unreservedly than the rest, and expresses a deeper reverence in listening to its voice, and a more entire preparation of heart to follow whithersoever it shall lead him, that one is the great St. Athanasius. But the more unfeignedly he revered the Bible, and felt the necessity of obeying it in all things, the more thankfully did he avail himself of the greatest of providential helps to the right understanding of the Bible, the record of that faith which the New Testament itself assumes to have been taught to those for whose immediate use it was written. That record helps to explain the Scriptures, somewhat in the same way, and

¹ *Ad Afros*, §. 9. t. i. 896. C.

² Epiph. in *Hær. Arian.*

with the same kind of evidence, as the grammar of a language, once rightly taught, explains the sentences of that language. If truth and sound philological knowledge would be advanced by throwing aside the grammar rules which we have learned, and analysing sentences till we have constructed each a new grammar for ourselves, then, and not else, the proposition, that each man must make out his own Gospel from Scripture, discarding all confidence in traditional Creeds, may be tenable in common sense, whatever Piety may think of it. Why is the assurance of faith any more undermined by accepting a constant and practically infallible tradition, to the effect that what is to us the obvious meaning of the Bible, was always accounted its true meaning, than by accepting in like manner the similar traditions, that these books, and no other, are the Bible; that these words in English answer to the corresponding words in the sacred languages, out of which they profess to be translated? Indeed, were it not for Romish corruptions, it would not be at all easy to enter into the mind of those who feel concerning Primitive Tradition otherwise than as if it were a great and real help from above. See what it comes to in this case of the Nicene Creed. Had the interpretation and anathema therein contained been merely the deliberate judgment of the three hundred Bishops, undoubtedly this would have been a very material fact: more material, perhaps, considering all things, than the like assent at any other time: still the whole would have been matter, not of testimony, but of opinion, and could not have proved, in any sense, an end of controversy. It might still be said, as unthinking people now say, "Why should I submit my judgment to the judgment of three hundred persons assembled at Nicæa fifteen hundred years ago?"

However, as the matter stands, we have the full benefit of their judgment (for the remains of St. Athanasius alone are sufficient to show, that they fully and critically examined the Scriptures on all the disputed points) : and we have moreover this greater—this unspeakable benefit ; that by them has been preserved the irrefragable testimony of the Church to the fact, that the Apostles interpreted the Bible in this way, and held their interpretation to be fundamental.

The argument may be thus stated. Christians disagree among themselves which are the essential, fundamental truths of their religion. Now if we could know in what doctrine Theophilus (*e. g.*) to whom St. Luke wrote, had been catechised, we should know these fundamental truths : those truths which the eye-witnesses and ministers of the WORD did most emphatically deliver to their converts. Now of course the fundamentals taught to Theophilus were the same as those taught to other converts : they were, in short, the baptismal Creed. However that Creed might vary in terms, as it was occasionally delivered by the Apostles and their successors, it must have been the same in substance all over the world ; being not so much the Creed of the several Apostles, as of that HOLY SPIRIT, by whom they were all alike guided. Can we any how ascertain the substance of that Creed ? The council of Nicæa enables us to do so, practically and effectually—nay, infallibly. For the fact to which the three hundred prelates bore witness, was one in which they could neither be deceived themselves, nor be able to deceive others. They must have known each one of them the baptismal Creed of his own Church, and the interpretation of it there commonly received, and professed by himself in his letters communicatory when he first entered on his epis-

copate. They could not, therefore, be deceived themselves. Neither could they deceive others: for, (not to dwell on the evidence of sincerity which many of them had given, and some afterwards gave again, by enduring pain and privations for the Gospel's sake,) every Christian must have known his baptismal Creed, and every Bishop must have known what letters communicatory he had received from his newly-ordained brethren. Moreover, their testimony ranges far beyond those who were actually present in the council. They were in the nature of a representative body; and it may be remarked by the way, that the Church councils are perhaps the first decided instance in the world's history of the adoption of that mode of government. The three hundred and eighteen were but so many out of the eighteen hundred prelates of the Roman world, whom circumstances permitted to be present at the council; and their decisions were scrupulously communicated to their absent brethren, and formally approved by them, with very trifling exceptions. "Know, O prince beloved of Heaven," writes St. Athanasius to the emperor Jovian¹, "that these things have been preached from the beginning, and this Creed the Fathers who assembled at Nicæa confessed; and to these have been awarded the suffrages of all the Churches every where in their respective places: both in Spain, and Britain, and Gaul, and all Italy and Dalmatia, Dacia and Mysia, Macedonia and all Greece; and in all Africa, and Sardinia, and Cyprus, and Crete, Pamphylia and Lycia, and Isauria, and those in Egypt and the divisions of Libya, and Pontus and Cappadocia, and those near us,

¹ I. 781. Even the Arian Philostorgius bore witness to their unanimity. *Ad calc. Theodoret. E. H.* 469. B. Ed. Vales.

and the Churches in the east, all besides a few persons who take part with Arius. For as to all the aforesaid, we know by their conduct what their judgment is; and moreover, we have their letters. And thou knowest that should there be some few who speak in opposition to this faith, they cannot create any prejudice against it, the whole world maintaining the apostolical Creed." We need not, therefore, hesitate to accept the Nicene formula as the testimony of all the Churches.

Any suspicion which might arise, of the proceedings having been tainted by political influence, is sufficiently obviated by what remains of Constantine's own correspondence at that time. Whether from ignorance, he being yet a catechumen and recent convert, or from the habit of looking at all things with the eye of a mere statesman, or from whatever reason, he was far, indeed, from entering into the views of St. Athanasius and those who acted with him. His language in the letter to Alexander, whereby he at first endeavoured to stifle the controversy, was such as this¹: "A certain empty question, which ought neither to have been asked nor answered . . . an argument kindled not concerning any main point of the Divine commands, . . . no new heresy brought in . . . a dispute about matters trifling to an excess of insignificance . . . you may keep up communion with each other, however decidedly your opinions vary in some minute point of detail." And it is too well known how easily he was afterwards perverted by the arts of Eusebius. The agreement, therefore, among the Bishops was in no sort the result of state influence: it can only be explained by the

¹ Ap. Socr. i. 7. p. 15. D. E; 16. C; 17. C.

fact, that such was in reality the tenor of the traditional confessions of their several Churches.

Now such a harmony of statements all over the world, even beyond the limits of the Roman Empire (for the Indians too are mentioned as allowing the Creed¹), admits of no account but a common origin; and that common origin can only be the first Gospel, as it was everywhere preached by Apostles and apostolical men. It is, in fact, a complete instance of successful application of the triple test of Vincentius. The "*ubique*" is insured by the council representing all Churches; the "*semper*," in each Church, by the succession of bishops, each receiving the Creed as a trust at his consecration; the "*ab omnibus*," by the like delivery of the same Creed to every Christian at his Baptism. The whole together constitutes an infallible tradition, of the same sort as that which induces us to receive the Scriptures themselves as genuine. And the comparison of it with Holy Scripture, which took place at Nicæa, and has been since repeated over and over, is the same kind of satisfactory confirmation to it, as when, in surveying a country, a line on being actually measured is found to be exactly of the length, which it ought to be on computation, perhaps through a long series of triangles. Such an operation strengthens the surveyor's confidence, on the one hand in the goodness of his instruments, on the other in the accuracy of his figures: just as the coincidence of Scripture and Tradition at Nicæa tends to prove (may we not say morally demonstrates?) both that the tradition is apostolical and that the interpretation is sound. Nor does it appear that the Arians of that time

¹ St. Ath. ad Afros, §. 2. αὐτὴ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην πεπλήρωκε ταύτην ἔγνωσαν καὶ Ἴνδοι, καὶ ὅσοι παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις βαρβάρους εἰσι Χριστιανοί. i. 892. B.

often, if ever, questioned this broad statement of Church practice; they commonly satisfied themselves with metaphysical and critical objections to particular words in the Creed, or particular constructions of the text of Scripture.

Now because the Romanists make bold with the word Tradition on very different matters from this—mere instructions of a part of the present Church, in no wise able to stand the test of Vincentius, even supposing them uncontradicted in Scripture—are we therefore to throw aside or depreciate a Tradition, established as we see the Nicene Creed is? Can we fairly say it is of small use, either in confirming the natural interpretation of GOD'S word, or in directing us what sort of points to esteem fundamental? Can any one of us soberly say, with any degree of confidence, where he himself might now have been without it? Take a case but too possible: suppose an inquiring person, not scholar enough to detect the falsehood and sophistry of the Arian and Socinian interpretations, nor to follow the argument when others detect them; must not this man rest his faith on Tradition? *i. e.* on the assurances of better scholars than himself, that the words of Scripture really mean what the Church says they do? And which Tradition would be safer and more consoling,—that of a few scholars and their writings, or that of the Apostolical Church, properly so called? Surely this latter, rightly understood, is a great blessing, and touches the foundation, and we cannot be too thankful for it. Surely men know not what they are doing, when they go about to shake our reliance on it.

In conclusion, a few words shall be offered to those who recoil from Tradition, not so much on argumentative grounds, as because they seem to feel that whatever is introduced, over and above the words of Holy Scripture, lessens the sacredness of any religious contemplation, and

hinders it from being altogether devotional. Such persons would do well to consider, whether the view which they deprecate would not tend to put them more entirely in possession of the words of Scripture, exempting them once and for ever from haunting doubts, and leaving them free to such thoughts as piety delights in. Let them once fairly endeavour to imagine themselves convinced that the Nicene Tradition is true and divine, and see what would then be their feelings on the subject. It would be with them in some measure as if a voice came from heaven, to say, This and this only is the meaning of the Scriptures touching the foundation of the faith. Were such a miracle to be vouchsafed, would it take away veneration from the Scriptures? Would it shake our confidence in them? Would it not be welcomed by some as a deliverance from doubt; by others as superseding in a great measure all necessity for that kind of critical discussion of GOD'S Word, which is continually leading them into peril of irreverence; by all as a most merciful addition to the supernatural treasure of Faith and Hope? Now the case of the Nicene Tradition is perhaps as near an approach to the realization of this supposed miracle, as might consist with the ordinary course of GOD'S moral government. Perhaps, had the evidence for it been more overpowering, no room would have been left for the requisite trial of our faith.

It follows, that we obtain in this way not only more entire conviction of understanding than if we were left to the unaided study of Scripture, but more also of that which is, on earth, Faith's appropriate sanction and encouragement—the reverential sense of the immediate presence of GOD. We discern an echo, as it were, of the divine voice, remote but unquestionable, and infallibly guiding us towards the true and only Temple:—a ray, not from Antiquity only,

but from the very Source of light, falling on the pages of the Bible, and bringing out in its full lustre that high and sacred Truth, which many might otherwise have failed to discern, and many more feared to enunciate. As things are, we see it so clearly that we can hardly understand how any one should ever miss it; and so, as in many other instances, the very abundance, anticipating our want, hinders our being duly thankful. But it is the part of Faith to remedy this; and the part also of Charity to remember our brethren, who feel, many of them, and own, their need of such guidance.

Of course, if so it had pleased Almighty GOD, the Scriptures might have been all clear of themselves; or their meaning might have been clearly revealed to individuals, at a certain stage of their progress in the Christian life: or there might be somewhere in the present Church an unerring court of appeal to fix their interpretation. Men may go on imagining the advantages of such a dispensation, until they have persuaded themselves that things are really so ordered. But theories of that kind, after all that can be said in their favour,—must they not incur the censure of true wisdom, as partaking of “that idle and not very innocent employment of forming imaginary models of a world, and schemes of governing it¹?” How much better, humbly to acquiesce in GOD’s dispensations as we find them! How much more dutiful, with all seriousness to use our privilege of belonging to a Church, which on the one hand refers us to Scripture as the standard and treasure of all necessary doctrine, on the other hand “ties her doctors, as much as the Council of Trent does, to expound Scripture according to the consent of the ancient Fathers²!”

¹ Bp. Butler, *Pref. to Anal.* sub fine.

² Bp. Taylor’s *Works*, x. 322.

Note, see page 133.

It may be well to insert here the whole of the formulary for the opening of a synod, as it is given by Isidore, and from him by Hardouin in the Preface to his "Concilia," t. i. col. 6—10.

"The order according to which the sacred Synod should be held in the name of God.

"At the first hour of the day, before sunrise, let all be cast out of the church; and, the entrances being barred, let all the door-keepers stand at the one door, through which the Prelates are to enter. And let all the Bishops, assembling, go in together, and take their seats according to the time of their consecration. When all the Bishops have come in and taken their places, next let those Presbyters be summoned, whose admission the nature of the case in hand seems to warrant. And let no deacon intrude himself among them. After these, may be admitted the more eminent among the Deacons, whose presence is required by the regular form of proceeding. And a circle being made of the Bishops' seats, let the Presbyters sit down behind them: those, namely, whom the Metropolitan has selected to be his assessors; such, of course, as may act with him both in judging and in pronouncing sentence. Let the Deacons stand in sight of the Bishops: then let the laity also enter, who, by choice of the Council, have obtained the privilege of being there. Moreover, the notaries must also come in, as is directed by the regular form, for reading documents and taking notes. Then, the doors being fastened, and the Prelates sitting in long silence, and lifting up their whole heart to the LORD, the Arch-deacon shall say, Pray ye. And presently they shall all fall on their faces to the earth, as well the Bishops as the Presbyters; and they continuing long in silent prayer, with weepings and mournings, one of the elder Bishops shall arise, and pour out a supplication aloud unto the LORD, they all lying still on the ground. He shall say,

"Behold, we are here, O LORD the HOLY GHOST, we are here: bound indeed by our sinful nature as men, yet in Thy name especially assembled together. Come to us, and be Thou with us, and deign to pour Thyself into our hearts; teach us what we are doing, whither we are going; and show us what measures it is our duty to take: that, by Thine own aid, we

may be able to please Thee in all things. Be Thou alone both the Prompter and the Executor of our decisions, who alone, with GOD the FATHER and His SON, art possessor of the glorious Name. Suffer us not to be perverters of justice, Thou, who most exceedingly delightest in equity. Let not ignorance draw us the wrong way, nor favour bias us, nor acceptance of gift or person corrupt; but unite us to Thyself effectually, by the gift of that grace which is thine only: that we may be one in Thee, and in nothing swerve from the truth; so that, as we are assembled in Thy name, so we may in all things uphold Justice under the sway of Religion; so that here our sentence may in nothing depart from Thee, and in future for things well done we may obtain eternal rewards.'

In this supplication, the prayer of 'Our Father' is not to be recited, nor the blessing, but the supplication only itself to be confirmed [by an 'Amen.']

"But when there are more Metropolitans than one, then by another the following prayer is repeated.

"O LORD, who commandest us to speak justice, and to judge the things that are right; grant unto us, that neither iniquity be found in our mouth, nor corruption in our mind; that with a pure heart we join discourse yet more carefully purified; that justice may go forth in our doings, and no guile be found in our tongue.'

"And by the third Metropolitan, in the third place, the following prayer is recited.

"O LORD JESU, who hast promised by the sacred oracle of Thy Word, that where two or three are gathered together in Thy name, Thou wouldst vouchsafe to be present in the midst of them; be Thou graciously present in our assembly, and illuminate our hearts by Thy mercy; that we may so keep the straight path of righteousness, as not in any measure to err from the excellency of mercy.'

"Another:

"Unbind, O LORD, the chain of our souls, and break the bond of wickedness wherein we are held; that for our deliverance we may render praise to Thee, whose chastisement we fear for our transgressions.

"God, who wilt that the truth should be spoken by the sons of men, and whose delight is, that they should deal purely in judgment; vouchsafe unto us to have an upright mind, that we may be able to utter with our lips the true justice.'

"The supplication being ended, and all having answered 'Amen,' the Archdeacon says again, 'Stand up.' Immediately let all arise, and with all fear of GOD, and orderly discipline, let Bishops and Presbyters both take their seats. And thus, all in their places sitting silently, a Deacon,

wearing the Albe, bringing forward in the midst the Book of the Canons, reads aloud the chapters on the manner of holding councils; i. e. from the Third Council of Toledo, No. 18: also, from the Canons of the Oriental Fathers, which Martin, [Bishop of Braga,] translated into Latin; No. 18. *Of the manner of holding a Synod.* Also from the Fourth of Toledo, No. 3. Also from the Council of Chalcedon, No. 18. Also from the Council of Agatha, (Agde in Languedoc,) No. 25 or 26: or any other of the Canons, which may seem to the Metropolitan fitter to be read. And the extract from the Canons being ended, the Metropolitan Bishop shall address the Council with an exhortation, thus saying:

“ Behold, most holy Prelates, having first offered our prayers to God, I present myself to your brotherhood with words of affectionate exhortation, and by the name of God beseech you, that whatsoever things you shall hear spoken by us, concerning the Deity, and concerning sacred orders, or religious conduct, you will receive with all piety, and with entire reverence strive to fulfil. Should it so happen that some one of you should differ from any opinion expressed, when we come all of us to mutual conference, let him, without any scruple about making disturbance, propose, to be conferred on again, the subjects of his scruple: in order that by God’s favour he may either give or receive instruction. In the next place, with the like adjuration, I approach and entreat you, that none of you in judgment either accept persons, or depart from the truth, smitten by fear or favour. Take care that you handle so religiously whatever shall occur to be judged of by our assembly, that neither peevish contention, to the overthrow of justice, find any place among us, nor yet in long searching for equity, the vigour and vigilance of our order begin to grow lukewarm.’

“ After this exhortation, wherewith the Metropolitan is wont to address the whole synod, presently the King, with his nobles, enters into the Council; and first, dismissing the attendant Bishops to a station behind him, turning to the altar, there says a prayer; and the prayer being over, he turns to the Council and speaks. And, falling on his face to the ground, and then raising himself, he both recommends himself to the prayers of the Bishops, and also, addressing the whole Council, with religious exhortation urges on them the duty of acting by the highest rule of justice. His exhortation being ended, the Deacon says, ‘ Let us pray.’

“ Then, the King having turned to the east, let all the Prelates together fall prostrate as before; and so let the following prayer, with the Lord’s Prayer, be recited.

“ O God our King, who swayest the dominion of kings, by whose governance it is exalted, and by whose abandonment it groweth frail; let

Thy servant N. have Thee present as his Director. Give unto him, O Lord, a right and firm faith, and never to grow weary of watching over Thy law. Let him so excel in uprightness of life, that he may be pleasing in the eyes of Thy Majesty: so rule over the nations in this life, that after his departure he may be crowned with the elect. OUR FATHER,' &c.

The Blessing.

“ ‘Be thou blessed, most serene Prince, by the LORD of all Powers, and the Almighty GOD. *Amen.* May He inspire thee to do mercy, and [therewith] to temper justice. *Amen.* He who hath assigned to thee the kingdom, may He Himself keep thine heart unharmed from the mischiefs of all people. *Amen.* And thou in whose sight our assembly is venerable for the LORD’s sake, mayest thou, with all thine, after long ages, receive the crown. *Amen.* Through our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who, with GOD the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, one GOD, is glorified for ever.’

“ This blessing having been pronounced, the Deacon says to him, ‘ In the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, depart in peace.’ Thereupon all shall answer, ‘ Thanks be to GOD.’ And immediately the King retires from the assembly of the Council.

“ After the departure therefore of the King, and the exhortation of the Archbishop beforementioned, shall enter in all who are Priests, Deacons, or in religious orders of any kind, to the hearing of the doctrinal discussion. Then the Archdeacon shall read the Canon of the Eleventh Council of Toledo, (No. 1,) against tumultuous excitement in councils. After the reading of this Canon, the proceedings of the Council of Ephesus shall be regularly read over; then a comparison and explanation shall take place concerning the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and also concerning the orders which relate to [ecclesiastical] offices; to ascertain whether or no unity be maintained in all the sees of the aforesaid assembly. In relation also to those causes, as the time of day may allow, shall be read the Epistles of Pope Leo to the Bishop Flavianus, concerning the errors of Eutyches and the mystery of the Trinity; the Canons also concerning unity of offices: Nor shall the Council pass to any other business, until all these have been gone through. Provided always that in the whole three days of solemn supplication nothing else be transacted or discussed, but only the comparison [before-mentioned] concerning the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and concerning sacred orders, or regulations of offices, so as that these subjects be entirely gone through in the course of those three entire days: that, as aforesaid, nothing else be done, but simply the inquiry carried on which relates to the aforesaid matters: provided also that in every case

the proceedings commence with the reading of some document suitable to the order and cause which is to be discussed.

“ A Prayer to be said on the second day at the opening of the Council.

“ ‘ We bow unto Thee, O LORD, the knees of our hearts, and beseech Thee that we may obtain the blessings which we most need at Thy hands; namely, that walking in watchful care before Thee, we may be of exact judgment in the arduous discrimination [of doctrine], and loving mercy, may be eminent by zeal in such a course as shall please Thee.’

“ Also a Prayer, on the third day, rehearsed at the opening of the Council.

“ ‘ From Thee, O LORD, with the words of an inward cry, we ask with one accord, that, being strengthened by the countenance of Thy grace, we may be made fearless heralds of the Truth, and have power to speak Thy word with all boldness.’

“ After these things, on the fourth day, other causes shall be admitted in order. And thereupon all the religious persons, who on the former days had been present in the Council for spiritual instruction's sake, shall go out; some Presbyters keeping their seats in the Council, whom the Metropolitan shall have appointed to that honour.

“ In any case, throughout the aforesaid three Litany days, both Bishops and Presbyters, with the Minister who bids the Prayers, shall begin by prostrating themselves in supplication. And then, after a collect, or a recapitulation of their prayers by the Metropolitan, they shall arise, and discuss, as was said, divine things only. But on other days, all standing by, the Collect shall be pronounced. And so sitting down they shall judge the matters brought in question. But let no disturbance be allowed, either among those who sit in the Council, or the by-standers.

“ Further, they are to enter into the Council each day in the same manner and order as is herein-before appointed. For the rest, whether they be other Presbyters or Deacons, Clerks or Laymen, not themselves members of the Council, who think themselves bound to appeal to it in any matter, let them give notice of their cause to the Archdeacon of the metropolitan church, and let him mention it to the Council; then let them severally be permitted to come in and state their case. But let none of the Bishops retire from the general assembly until the hour come for all to retire. Again, let no one presume to break up the Council, unless all things shall have been so determined, as that every point which has been settled by common consultation, is subscribed by the hand of every Bishop severally. Provided always, that two or three days before the Council be dissolved, they revise with diligent consideration all the Canons they have drawn up, lest haply they may have stumbled in something. Also, that on the day

appointed for the breaking up of the Council, the Canons which have been decreed in the holy Synod be read publicly before the Church. And when they are ended, there shall be a choral response of 'Amen.'

" Then returning to the place where they sat in Council, let them subscribe the same Canons. The Metropolitan also must give them notice concerning the next following Easter, on what day it comes on ; also of the time in the next year when they shall come to hold Council. Certain of the Bishops, too, must be selected, to assist the Metropolitan in the celebration of the feasts of the Nativity and of Easter. After these things, the Archdeacon saying, ' Pray ye,' let all together cast themselves down on the ground ; and when they have there prayed for a considerable time, let one of the seniors recite this prayer.

" ' There is not, O LORD, in any conscience of man such virtue as may be able, without offence, to declare the judgments of Thy will. Therefore, seeing that Thine eyes have beheld our frailty, account it for perfection, we beseech Thee, that it is our chief wish to decide by the perfect rule of justice. Thee in our beginnings we did ask to meet us [with Thine aid] ; Thee again in this termination of our decisions we beseech to be present, making allowance for our deviations. For why ? to spare our ignorance ; to allow for our wandering ; to crown the full service of our prayers with full practical efficacy. And because, through the galling of our conscience, we pine away, fearing lest either ignorance should have drawn us into some error, or haply too eager will should have urged us to swerve aside from justice : for this we supplicate and beseech Thee, that if we have contracted any offence during the solemnization of this Council, by thy pardon we may find it venial ; and that whereas we are about to give release from attendance on this assembled Council, we ourselves may first be released from all the bands of our own sins : so that as transgressors Thy pardon may attend us, and as confessing our faults to Thee, Thy eternal recompence.'

" To this prayer the prayer called Pater Noster shall be subjoined ; and over them still prostrate the following blessing shall be pronounced.

" ' CHRIST, the Son of GOD, who is the beginning and the end, vouchsafe unto you the fulness of charity. And may He who hath brought you safely to the completion of this Synod, cause you to be absolved from all infection of sin. *Amen.* So that, freed more entirely from all guilt, absolved also by the gift of the HOLY GHOST, you may return happily, and seek again unharmed the resting places of your own habitations. *Amen.* Which may He vouchsafe to grant, whose kingdom and dominion abideth for ever and ever. *Amen.*'

" These directions having been observed, and the Archdeacon having said, ' In the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, let us go in peace,' presently

all shall arise together, and the Metropolitan still keeping his seat, all alike, beginning from him first, shall mutually bestow on each other the kiss [of peace]. And thus, with the mutual giving and receiving of peace, the meeting of the Council shall be dissolved."

The above document most probably belongs to the good days of the Spanish Church, when it first recovered from Arianism. It must have been drawn up after the 11th Council of Toledo, A.D. 675, and apparently before 714, at which time the Saracens began to overrun Spain. This would settle its probable date within about 40 years.

THE END.

TRACTS FOR THE TIMES.

CATENA PATRUM.

No. III.

TESTIMONY OF WRITERS IN THE LATER ENGLISH CHURCH TO THE
DUTY OF MAINTAINING QUOD SEMPER, QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD AB
OMNIBUS TRADITUM EST.

THE following extracts from English Divines, are but expositions and comments upon the celebrated Tract of Vincentius Lirinensis¹ on Heresy, which has been so generally adopted by them, that it may justly be considered as the formal manifestation of our Church as regards all the controversies of the last three hundred years. In selecting them, it has been thought advisable, as in the two previous Catenas, not to include the writings of the Reformers of the 16th century, because the particular complexion of their opinions is the very subject keenly debated and claimed by opposite schools of opinion at the present day. It has been thought safer to show that the Succession of our Standard Divines ever since their times, understood them to hold that view of doctrine which it has been the endeavour of these Tracts to recommend; and that no other can be taken without contradicting both that illustrious Succession itself, and its judgment concerning the Reformers.

And in the next place, were the Reformers directly appealed to in these Catenas, it might be plausibly asked why the list stopped with them, and did not ascend to the generation

¹ This Tract has just been republished with a translation at Oxford, and should be carefully studied by all who wish to understand in what sense the English Church upholds tradition.

before them, as if they were to be considered the founders of our Church, instead of being as they are really, one link in a chain. No greater injury can be done them than to make it appear, (as is too often done at this day,) that they occupied or professed a position which belongs only to heretics, that of originating the faith they maintained. Against such a notion especially, the subject of the present selection of Testimonies is expressly directed; in which it is maintained that no individuals, since the Apostles, are by themselves expositors of the will of Christ; that the unanimous witness of Christendom is the only, and the fully sufficient, and the really existing guarantee of the whole revealed Faith; that Catholicity is the only test of truth.

Considering the copiousness and value of the following extracts, the doctrine maintained in them need not here be discussed. With relation to the supreme authority of inspired Scripture it stands thus:—Catholic tradition teaches revealed truth, Scripture proves it; Scripture is the document of Faith, tradition the witness of it; the true Creed is the Catholic interpretation of Scripture, or Scripturally proved tradition; Scripture by itself teaches mediately and proves decisively; tradition by itself proves negatively and teaches positively; Scripture and tradition taken together are the joint Rule of Faith.

Acknowledgment must here be made for the kind assistance of two friends of the compiler, who have supplied him with many valuable references.

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| 16. Ussher. | 37. Collier. |
| 17. Bramhall. | 38. Leslie. |
| 18. Sanderson. | 39. Waterland. |
| 19. Cosin. | 40. Bingham. |
| 20. Hammond. | 41. Jebb. |
| 21. Thorndike. | 42. Van Mildert. |

JEWELL, BISHOP.—*A Sermon preached at Paul's Cross.*

YET are there some that whisper in corners, that the Mass is a blessed and a Catholic thing, and that the holy Communion, which now GOD of His great mercy hath restored to us, is wicked and schismatical, and therefore they murmur against it, therefore they refrain it, and will not come to it. O merciful GOD, who would think there could be so much wilfulness in the heart of man! O Gregory! O Augustine! O Hierome, O Chrysostom! O Leo! O Dionyse! O Anacletus! O Sistus! O Paul! O CHRIST! if we be deceived herein, ye are they that have deceived us. You have taught us these schisms and divisions, you have taught us these Heresies. Thus ye ordered the holy Communion in your time, the same we received at your hand, and have faithfully delivered it unto the people. And that ye may the more marvel at the wilfulness of such men, they stand this day against so many old Fathers, so many Doctors, so many examples of the primitive Church, so manifest and so plain words of the holy Scriptures, and yet have they herein not one Father, not one Doctor, not one allowed example of the primitive Church to make for them. And when I say, no one, I speak not this in vehemency of spirit, or heat of talk, but even as before GOD, by the way of simplicity and truth, lest any of you should haply be deceived, and think there is more weight in the other side, than in conclusion there shall be found. And therefore once again I say, of all the words of the holy Scriptures, of all the examples of the primitive Church, of all the old Fathers, of all the ancient Doctors, in these causes they have not one.

Here the matter itself that I have now in hand, putteth me in remembrance of certain things that I uttered unto you, to the same purpose, at my last being in this place. I remember I laid out then, here before you, a number of things that are now in controversy, whereunto our adversaries will not yield. And I said, perhaps boldly, as it might then seem to some men, but as I myself and the learned of our adversaries themselves do

well know, sincerely and truly, that none of all them, that this day stand against us, are able, or shall ever be able to prove against us, any one of all those points, either by the Scriptures, or by example of the primitive Church, or by the old Doctors, or by the ancient general Councils.

Since that time it hath been reported in places, that I spake then more than I was able to justify and make good. However, these reports were only made in corners, and therefore ought the less to trouble me. But if my sayings had been so weak, and might so easily have been reprov'd, I marvel that the parties never yet came to the light, to take the advantage. For my promise was, and that openly here before you all, that if any man were able to prove the contrary, I would yield and subscribe to him and he should depart with the victory. Loth I am to trouble you with rehearsal to such things as I have spoken afore; and yet because the case so requireth, I shall desire you that have already heard me, to bear the more with me in this behalf. Better it were to trouble your ears with twice hearing of one thing, than to betray the truth of God. The words that I then spake, as near as I can call them to mind, were these: If any learned man of all our adversaries, or if all the learned men that be alive, be able to bring any one sufficient sentence out of any old Catholic Doctor, or Father, or out of any old general Council, or out of the holy Scriptures of God, or any one example of the primitive Church, whereby it may be clearly and plainly proved that there was any private mass in the whole world at that time, for the space of six hundred years after CHRIST; or that there was then any Communion ministered unto the people under one kind; or that the people had their common prayers then in a strange tongue, that they understood not: or that the Bishop of Rome was then called an universal Bishop, or the head of the universal Church; or that the people was then taught to believe that CHRIST'S Body is really¹, substantially, corporally, carnally or naturally in the

¹ Jewell must not be considered to differ from the words "verily and indeed" in our Catechism. He interprets "really" by "*carnally*;" the Catechism

Sacrament, &c. . . . If any man alive were able to prove any of these articles, by any one clear or plain clause or sentence, either of the Scriptures or of the old Doctors, or of any old general Council, or by any example of the primitive Church: I promised then that I would give over and subscribe unto him.

These words are the very like, I remember, I spake here openly before you all. And these be the things that some men say, I have spoken and cannot justify. But I, for my part, will not only not call in any thing that I then said, (being well assured of the truth therein,) but also will lay more matter to the same: that if they that seek occasion, have any thing to the contrary, they may have the larger scope to reply against me.

Wherefore, besides all that I have said already, I will say further, and yet nothing so much as might be said. If any one of all our adversaries be able clearly and plainly to prove, by such authority of the Scriptures, the old Doctors and Councils, as I said before, that it was then lawful for the Priest to pronounce the words of consecration closely and in silence to himself; or that the Priest had then authority to offer up CHRIST unto His Father: or to communicate and receive the Sacrament for another as they do, or to apply the virtue of CHRIST's death and passion to any man by means of the Mass: or that it was then thought a sound doctrine to teach the people that the Mass *ex opere operato*, that is, even for that it is said and done, is able to remove any part of our sin, &c. &c. . . . if any one of all our adversaries be able to avouch any one of all these articles, by any such sufficient authority of Scriptures, Doctors, or Councils, as I have required, as I said before, so say I now again, I am content to yield unto him and to subscribe. But I am well assured that they shall never be able truly to allege one sentence. And because I know it, therefore I speak it, lest ye haply should be deceived¹.—*Works*, pp. 57, 58.

opposes "verily and indeed" to *figuratively* and *nominally*. A mystical, spiritual, true, and positive presence of Christ's blessed Body and Blood, is at once not *carnal* and not *figurative*.

¹ Vide also *Apol.* pp. 43. 53—5. 62, 63. *Defence*, pp. 614—617.

CONVOCATION OF A.D. 1571.

They shall in the first place be careful never to teach any thing from the pulpit, to be religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and collected out of that very doctrine by the Catholic Fathers, and ancient Bishops.—*Canon about Preachers.*

THE QUEEN'S COUNCIL. A.D. 1582.

IF the Papists shall show any ground of Scripture, and wrest it to their sense, let it be showed by the interpretation of the Old Doctors, such as were before Gregory I. But if they can show no Doctor that agreed with them in their said opinion before that time, then to conclude that they have no succession in that doctrine from the time of the Apostles, and above four hundred years after (when doctrine and religion were most pure), for that they can show no predecessor whom they might succeed in the same.—*Rules given to the Bishops; vide Strype's Whitgift, p. 98.*

BILSON, BISHOP.—*On Subjection and Rebellion.*

PHI. What one point of our Religion is not Catholic?

THEO. No one point of that, which this realm hath refused, is truly Catholic. Your having and adoring of images in the Church: your public service in a tongue not understood of the people: your gazing on the Priest while he alone eateth and drinketh at the LORD's table: your barring the people from the LORD's cup: your sacrificing the Son of GOD to His Father for the sins of the world: your adoring the elements of bread and wine with Divine honor instead of CHRIST: your seven sacraments: your shrift: your releasing souls out of Purgatory by prayers and pardons: your compelling Priests to live single: your meritorious vowing and performing pilgrimages: your invocation of Saints departed: your rules of perfection for Monks and Friars: your relying on the Pope as head of the Church, and

Vicar General unto CHRIST: these with infinite other superstitions in action, and errors in doctrine, we deny to have any foundation in the Scriptures, or confirmation in the general consent or use of the Catholic Church.

PHI. We stick not on your words, which you utter to your most advantage: but be not these things as we defend them, and you reject them, Catholic?

THEO. Nothing less.

PHI. What count you Catholic?

THEO. You were best define that: it toucheth you nearest.

PHI. I mean Catholic, as Vincentius doth, that wrote more than one thousand one hundred years ago.

THEO. So do I. And in that sense no point of your Religion, which this realm hath refused, is Catholic.

PHI. All.

THEO. None.

PHI. These are but brag.

THEO. Indeed they are so. Nothing is more common in your mouths than Catholic: and in your Faith nothing less.

PHI. Who proveth that?

THEO. Yourselves, who after you have made great stir for Catholic, Catholic, and all Catholic, when you come to issue, you return it with a *non est inventus*.

PHI. Will you lie a little?

THEO. I might use that sometimes, which is so often with you: but in this I do not.

PHI. I say you do.

THEO. That will appear, if you take any of those points which I have rehearsed.

PHI. Which you will.

THEO. Nay, the choice shall be yours, because the proof must be yours.

PHI. Take them as they lie. Having and worshipping of images in the Church, is it not Catholic?

THEO. It is not.

PHI. Eight hundred years ago the General Council of Nice, the second, decreed it lawful, and ever since it hath been used.

THEO. Catholic should have four conditions by Vincentius' rule, and this hath not one of them. There can nothing be Catholic, unless it be confirmed two ways: first by the authority of God's law, and next by the tradition of the Catholic Church, not that the Canon of Scripture is not perfect and sufficient enough for all points of Faith, but because many men draw and stretch the Scriptures to their fancies, therefore it is very needful that the line of the Prophetical and Apostolical interpretation should be directed by the rule of the Ecclesiastical and Catholic sense. Now in the Catholic Church herself we must take heed we hold that which hath been believed at all times, in all places, of all persons, for that is truly and properly Catholic.

By this rule your erecting and adoring of Images in the Church is not Catholic. For first, it is prohibited by God's law: and where the text goeth against you, the gloss cannot help you. If there be no precept for it in the word of God, in vain do you seek in the Church for the Catholic sense and interpretation of that which is no where found in the Scriptures. If it be not Prophetical nor Apostolical, it cannot be Catholic nor Ecclesiastical.

Again, how hath this been always in the Church, which was first decreed seven hundred and eighty years after CHRIST? It is too young to be Catholic that began so late; you must go nearer CHRIST and His Apostles, if you will have it Catholic or ancient.

Thirdly; all places and persons did not admit the decrees of that Council. For besides Africa, and Asia the greater, which never received them, the Churches of England, France and Germany did contradict and refute both their actions and reasons. And in Greece itself not long before, a synod of three hundred and thirty Bishops at Constantinople condemned as well the suffering as reverencing of Images.—p. 546.

Id.—Perpetual Government of Christ's Church.

“Were the word of God in this point indifferent, which for ought I yet see is very resolute against them, the general consent

of all Antiquity, that never so expounded St. Paul's words, nor ever mentioned any Lay-Presbyters to govern the Church, is to me a strong rampire against all these new devices." . . . "For my part what I find generally received in the first Church of Christ, I will see it strongly refuted before I will forsake it."—*Epistle to Reader, and p. 280.*

HOOKER, PRESBYTER AND DOCTOR.—*Ecclesiastical Polity.*

But our naming of JESUS CHRIST our Lord is not enough to prove us Christians, unless we also embrace that Faith which CHRIST hath published unto the world. To show that the Angel of Pergamus continued in Christianity, behold how the Spirit of CHRIST speaketh, "Thou keepest my name, and thou hast not denied my Faith:" concerning which Faith, "the rule thereof," saith Tertullian, "is one alone, immoveable, and no way possible to be better framed anew!" What rule that is, he showeth by rehearsing those few articles of Christian belief. And before Tertullian, Ireney: "The Church though scattered through the whole world, unto the utmost borders of the earth, hath from the Apostles and their Disciples received belief." The parts of which belief he also reciteth, in substance the very same with Tertullian, and thereupon inferreth, "This Faith, the Church being spread far and wide, preserveth, as if one house did contain them: these things it equally embraceth, as though it had even one soul, one heart, and no more: it publisheth, teacheth, and delivereth these things with uniform consent, as if GOD had given it but one only tongue wherewith to speak. He which amongst the guides of the Church is best able to speak, uttereth no more than this; and less than this the most simple doth not utter" when they make profession of their faith.—Book iii. § 1.

CONVOCATION OF A.D. 1603.

. . . Following the royal steps of our most worthy King, because he therein followeth the rules of the Scriptures and the practice of the Primitive Church, we do commend to all the true members of the Church of England, these our directions and ob-

servations ensuing. . . . The honour and dignity of the name of the cross begat a reverend estimation even in the Apostles' times (for aught that is known to the contrary), of the sign of the cross, which the Christians shortly after used in all their actions. . . This use of the sign of the cross in baptism was held in the Primitive Church, as well by the Greeks as the Latins, with one consent and great applause. . . This continual and general use of the sign of the cross is evident by many testimonies of the ancient Fathers. . . But the abuse of a thing doth not take away the lawful use of it. Nay, so far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like churches, in all things which they held and practised, that, as the Apology of the Church of England confesseth, it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies, which do neither endamage the Church of God nor offend the minds of sober men; and only departed from them in those particular points wherein they were fallen both from themselves in their ancient integrity, and from the Apostolical churches which were their first founders.—*Canon 30.*

OVERALL, BISHOP.—*Letter to Grotius.*

I believe there are few things in your book, which will not be approved by the Bishop of Ely (Launcelot Andrews) and the rest of our more learned Divines: unless, perhaps, they may hesitate respecting those passages which seem to give to lay powers a definitive judgment in matters of Faith; to deny the true power and jurisdiction of Pastors of the Church; and to rank Episcopacy among unnecessary things. For our Divines hold, that the right of definitive judgment, in matters of Faith, is to be given to Synods of Bishops, and other learned Ministers of the Church, chosen and convened for this purpose, according to the usage of the Ancient Church: who shall determine, from the Holy Scriptures, explained by the consent of the Ancient Church, and not by the rival spirit of Neoterics¹.

¹ Vide Bp. Jebb's Pastoral Instructions, p. 306.

MORTON, BISHOP.

I do therefore here solemnly profess, in the presence of Almighty God, that by His grace preventing and assisting me, I have always lived, and purpose to die, in the true Catholic Faith wherein I was baptized; firmly believing all the Canonical Scripture of the Old and New Testament, and fully assenting to every article of all those three Creeds, (commonly called the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene or Constantinopolitan Creed, and the Athanasian Creed,) which in the Ancient Church were accounted the adequate rules of Faith, and have accordingly been received as such, by the Church of England.

As for Councils, that are free and generally consisting of competent persons, lawfully summoned, and proceeding according to the word of God, such as were the four first, viz. those of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon; I do reverence them as the supreme tribunals of the Church of CHRIST upon earth, for judging of heresies, and composing differences in the Church. And as I utterly condemn all heresies that have been condemned by any of them, so I heartily wish that all the present differences in the Church of God might be determined by such a free General Council, as any of those four were already mentioned.—*His last Will*¹.

FIELD, PRESBYTER.—*Of the Church.*

For first, we receive the number and names of the authors of books Divine and Canonical, as delivered by tradition. This tradition we admit, for that, though the Books of Scripture have not their authority from the approbation of the Church, but win credit of themselves, and yield sufficient satisfaction to all men, of their Divine truth, whence we judge the Church that receiveth them, to be led by the Spirit of God; yet the number, authors, and integrity of the parts of these Books, we receive as delivered by tradition.

¹ Vide *Christian Remembrancer*, Nov. 1823, p. 658.

The second kind of tradition which we admit, is that summary comprehension, of the chief heads of Christian doctrine, contained in the Creed of the Apostles, which was delivered to the Church, as a rule of her Faith. For though every part thereof be contained in the Scripture, yet the orderly connexion and distinct explication of these principal articles gathered into an epitome, wherein are implied, and whence are inferred all conclusions Theological, is rightly named a tradition. The third, is that form of Christian doctrine, and explication of the several parts thereof, which the first Christians receiving of the same Apostles, that delivered to them the Scriptures, commended to posterities. This may rightly be named a tradition, not as if we were to believe anything without the warrant and authority of the Scripture, but for that we need a plain and distinct explication of many things, which are somewhat obscurely contained in the Scripture : which being explicated, the Scriptures which otherwise we should not so easily have understood, yield us satisfaction that they are so indeed, as the Church delivereth them unto us.

The fourth kind of tradition, is the continued practice of such things, as neither are contained in the Scripture expressly, nor the examples of such practice expressly there delivered, though the grounds, reasons, and causes of the necessity of such practice, be there contained, and the benefit, or good that followeth of it ; of this sort is the Baptism of Infants, which is therefore named a tradition, because it is not expressly delivered in Scripture, that the Apostles did baptize infants, nor any express precept there found, that they should so do. Yet is not this so received by bare and naked tradition, but that we find the Scripture to deliver unto us the grounds of it. The fifth kind of tradition, comprehendeth such observations, as in particular, are not commanded in Scripture, nor the necessity of them from thence concluded, though in general without limitation of times, and other circumstances, such things be there commanded. Of this sort, many think, the observation of the Lent fast to be, the fast of the fourth and sixth days of the week, and some other. . . .

Thus having set down the kinds and sorts of traditions, it

remaineth to examine, by what means we may come to discern, and by what rules we may judge, which are true and indubitate traditions. The first rule is delivered by Augustine ; quod universa tenet ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate Apostolicâ traditum, rectissime creditur. Whatsoever the whole Church holdeth, not being decreed by the authority of Councils, but having been ever holden, may rightly be thought to have proceeded from Apostolic authority. The second rule is, whatsoever all, or the most famous and renowned in all ages, or at the least in diverse ages, have constantly delivered, as received from them that went before them, no man contradicting or doubting of it, may be thought to be an Apostolical tradition. The third rule, is the constant testimony of the Pastors of an Apostolic Church, successively delivered : to which some add the present testimony of an Apostolic Church, whose declinings when they began, we cannot precisely tell. But none of the Fathers admit this rule. For when they urge the authority and testimony of Apostolic Churches, for the proof, or reproof of true or pretended traditions, they stand upon the consenting voice, or silence, of the Pastors of such Churches, successively in diverse ages concerning such things. Some add the testimony of the present Church : but we inquire after the rule, whereby the present Church may know true traditions from false ; and besides, though the whole multitude of believers, at one time in the world, cannot err pertinaciously, and damnably, in embracing false traditions instead of true ; yet they that most sway things in the Church may, yea even the greater part of a general Council ; so that this can be no sure rule for men to judge of traditions by. And therefore Canus reasoneth foolishly, that whatsoever the Church of Rome practiseth, which she may not do without special warrant from God, and yet hath no warrant in Scripture so to do, the same things and the practice of them she hath received by tradition. He giveth example in the present practice of the Romish Church, in dispensing with, and remitting vows and oaths, and in dissolving marriages, (not consummated by carnal knowledge,) by admitting men into orders of Religion. But this

practice of the Romish Church, we condemn, as wicked and Antichristian.—pp. 375. 378.

WHITE, BISHOP.

The Holy Scripture is the fountain and living spring, containing in all-sufficiency and abundance the pure water of life, and whatsoever is necessary to make God's people wise unto salvation. The consentient and unanimous testimony of the true Church of CHRIST in the primitive ages thereof, is *canalis*, a conduit-pipe to derive and convey to succeeding generations the celestial water contained in the Holy Scriptures, . . . The Ecclesiastical story reporteth of Nazianzen and Basil, that in their studying the Holy Scriptures they collected the sense of them, not from their own judgment or presumption, but from the testimony and authority of the ancients, who had received the rule of the true intelligence of Scripture from the Holy Apostles by succession. . . . The reformed Churches reject not all traditions, but such as are spurious, superstitious, and not consonant to the prime rule of faith, to wit, the Holy Scripture; but genuine traditions, agreeable to the rule of faith, subservient to piety, consonant with holy Scripture, derived from the Apostolical times by a successive current, and which have the uniform testimony of pious antiquity, are received and honoured by us. Now such are those which follow the historical tradition concerning the number, integrity, dignity, and perfection of the books of Canonical Scripture, the Catholic exposition of many sentences of Scripture, the Apostles' Creed, the baptism of infants, the perpetual virginity of the blessed Virgin Mary, the righteous observation of the Lord's Day, and some other Festivals, as Easter, Pentecost, &c. baptizing and administration of the holy Eucharist in public assemblies and congregations, the service of the Church in a known language, the delivering of the Communion to the people in both kinds, the superiority and authority of Bishops over Priests and Deacons in jurisdiction and power of ordination, &c.—*On the Sabbath*, pp. 12. 14. 97.

HALL, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.—*Conc. ad clerum.* 1623.

In truth he who heartily subscribes to the Word of GOD, con- signed, as it is, to the everlasting record of letters, to all the primitive Creeds, to the four General Councils, to the concordant judgment of the Fathers for the first six hundred years from Christ, which we of the Reformed Church religiously profess to do, even though he be not exempt from error in minor points, yet he shall never be an heretic. Any particular Church may easily err, by affixing heresy to an opinion undeserving of it, whether a truth, or but a light error ; but heavily neither soul nor Church can err, which walks heedfully in the steps of the universal and ancient Church.

LAUD, ARCHBISHOP AND MARTYR.—*Conference with Fisher.*

The third particular I consider is, Suppose in the whole Catholic Church Militant, an absolute infallibility in the prime foundations of Faith absolutely necessary to Salvation ; and that this power of not erring so, is not communicable to a General Council, which represents it, but that the Council is subject to error. This supposition does not only preserve that which you desire in the Church, an infallibility, but it meets with all inconveniences, which usually have done, and daily do perplex the Church. And here is still a remedy for all things. For if private respects, if bandies in a faction, if power and favour of some parties, if weakness of them which have the managing, if any unfit mixture of State Councils, if any departure from the rule of the Word of God, if any thing else sway and wrench the Council ; the whole Church upon evidence found in express Scripture, or demonstration of this miscarriage, hath power to represent herself in another Body, or Council, and to take order for what was amiss, either practised, or concluded. So here is a means without any infringing any lawful authority of the Church, to preserve or reduce unity, and yet grant, as I did, and as the Church of England doth, that a General Council may err : and

this course the Church heretofore took ; for she did call, and represent herself in a new Council, and define against the heretical conclusions of the former, as in the case at Ariminum, and the second of Ephesus, is evident ; and in other Councils named by Bellarmine. Now the Church is never more cunningly abused than when men out of this truth, that she may err, infer this falsehood, that she is not to be obeyed. For it will never follow she may err, therefore she may not govern. For he that says, "Obey them which have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls" (Heb. xiii. 17.), commands obedience, and expressly ascribes rule to the Church. And that not only a Pastoral power, to teach and direct, but a Prætorian also, to controul and censure too, where errors or crimes are against points fundamental, or of great consequence, else St. Paul would not have given the rule of excommunication, (1 Cor. v.) Nor CHRIST Himself have put the man that will not hear and obey the Church into the place and condition of an Ethnic and a Publican, as He doth, (Matt. xviii.) And Solomon's rule is general, and he hath it twice : My son, forsake not the teaching or instruction of thy mother. Now this is either spoken or meant of a natural mother ; and her authority over her children is confirmed, (Ecclus. iii.) And the fool will be upon him that despiseth her, (Prov. xv.) or 'tis extended also to our Mystical and Spiritual Mother, the Church, and so the general note upon the place expresses it. And I cannot but incline to this opinion, because the blessings which accompany this obedience are so many and great, as that they are not like to be the fruits of obedience to a natural mother only, as Solomon expresses them all, (Prov. vi.) And in all this here is no exception of the Mother's erring. For *Mater errans*, an erring Mother loses neither the right nor the power of a Mother by her error. And I marvel what Son should show reverence or obedience if no Mother that hath erred might exact it. 'Tis true, the Son is not to follow his Mother's error, or his Mother into error. But 'tis true too, 'tis a grievous crime in a Son to cast off all obedience to his Mother, because at some time, or in some things she hath fallen into error. And howsoever this consideration meets with this incon-

venience, as well as the rest, for suppose (as I said) in the whole Catholic Militant Church an absolute infallibility in the prime foundations of Faith absolutely necessary to salvation: and then, though the Mother Church, provincial or national, may err, yet if the Grand Mother, the whole Universal Church, cannot in these necessary things, all remains safe, and all occasions of disobedience taken from the possibility of the Church's erring, are quite taken away. Nor is this Mother less to be valued by her children because in some smaller things age had filled her face fuller of wrinkles. For where 'tis said, that CHRIST makes to Himself a Church without spot or wrinkle, (Eph. v.) that is not understood of the Church Militant but of the Church Triumphant. And to maintain the contrary is a branch of the spreading Heresy of Pelagianism. Nor is the Church on earth any freer from wrinkles in Doctrine and Discipline than she is from spots in Life and Conversation.—p. 256.

MONTAGUE, BISHOP.

Where is it bidden in Scripture to baptize infants, or to administer to communicants in the Lord's Supper under both kinds? There are ever so many such instances in sacred matters, instituted by GOD, committed to the Church, practised by the Church, of which notwithstanding it may be declared, Scripture teacheth nothing such, Scripture does not preach these things.—*Orig. Eccles. ii. 67. p. 396.*

JACKSON, PRESBYTER AND DOCTOR.—*On the holy Catholic Faith and Church.*

The three special notes of the Catholic Faith or Church, by him required, are Universality, Antiquity and Consent. Whether these three members be different or subordinate, and oftentimes coincident, I leave it to be scanned by Logicians. According to the author's limitation, all three marks agree to us, not to the Romanist.

First, concerning Universality, the question is not, whether at

this present time, or in any former age for these thousand years past, there are or have been more, which profess the present Romish Religion established in the Church of Rome, than the Religion established in the Reformed Churches since the separation was made. If we should come to calculate voices after this manner, whether will you be a Roman Catholic, or a Protestant: they might, perhaps, have three for one amongst such as profess themselves Christians, ready to cry, I am not for the Protestants; but for the Roman Catholics will I be. But it was far from Vincentius his meaning, that Universality should be measured after this fashion; for he very well knew that the Arian faction had prevailed especially by this tumultary kind of canvass or calculation. The multitude of voices thus taken for them, may prove their faction to be stronger and greater than our Church; it cannot prove their Faith to be so universal as our Faith is. The fallacy by which the Romanists deceive poor simple people, is in making them believe, that our Religion and their Religion, our Faith and their Faith are *duo prima diversa*, or so totally distinct, that part of the one could not be included in the other. But for the universality of our Faith we have every member of the Roman Church a suffragant or witness for us. First, nothing is held as a point of Faith in our Church, but the present Romish Church doth hold the same, and confess the same to have been held by all orthodoxal antiquity. So that for the form of Faith established in our Church, we have the consent of the Primitive Church, of the four first General Councils, of all succeeding ages unto this present day, the consent likewise of the present Romish Church, and of ourselves. Now as France is a great deal bigger than Normandy, if we compare them as distinct and opposite, and yet France and Normandy is bigger than France without Normandy: so likewise though the present visible Romish Church be much greater than the Church of England, yet seeing the Romish Church, how great soever, doth hold all the points of Faith which our Church doth, for Catholic and orthodoxal; our consent, and their consent, our confession and their confession, is more universal than their consent without ours. But if their consent unto the points of Faith believed by

us, prove our Faith to be universal, and our Church by consequence to be Catholic; why should not our consent unto the points of Faith believed by them, prove their Faith to be universal, or their Church to be Catholic? Because it is not enough to hold all points of Catholic Faith, unless the same points be kept holy and undefiled. The Romish Church, we grant, doth hold all points of Catholic Faith, and so far as she holds these points, we dissent not from her: yet dissent from her we do in that she hath defiled and polluted the Catholic Faith, with new and poisonous doctrines; for which she neither hath the consent of antiquity, nor of the Reformed Churches. And in respect of these doctrines, she stands convicted of schism and heresy, by Vincentius his rules. For it is with him a fundamental rule, that no present visible Church, hath any authority to commend anything as a point of Faith to posterity, which hath not been commended to the said Church by antiquity derived from the Apostles' times. A proficiency or growth in Faith, he allows and granteth, *modò sit in eodem genere*, so it be in the same kind, or proceed from the same root; but for additions or new inventions, he takes them for the marks of schism and heresy.

So then we hold the Catholic Faith, and they hold the Catholic Faith. And seeing they hold the Catholic Faith in the same measure that we do, is it not reason they should be termed Catholics as well as we, though not so good Catholics as we? No reason they should be termed Catholics at all. Where is the difference? In this. We hold it pure and undefiled, they have defiled and polluted it for many generations, and do still defile it with many loathsome additions and inventions. Now in this case the denomination followeth the worsè part, that is, they are not so much to be reputed Catholics for that they hold the Catholic Faith, as to be adjudged heretics and schismatics, because they have defiled and polluted it with many new inventions, and being admonished hereof and reprovèd, will not purify their Faith, will not reform their religion according to the rule of Faith and the practice of antiquity. Their Faith not purified from the additions of the second Nicene and Trent Council, can

be no Catholic Faith. Their religion not reformed, can be no true religion, save only in reference to Paganism, Judaism, or Mahometism. For as Dionysius saith, *Bonum non est nisi ex integra causa, malum ex quolibet defectu*. Nothing is good which is not entire and sound, evil ariseth from every defect. Every new addition or invention in matters of Faith or Doctrine, is enough to make that Church schismatical, which before was Catholic and orthodoxal. Catholic and orthodoxal no Church can be, unless it hold all points of Faith without admixture of human inventions or of new articles. The admixture of a great deal of man's meat with a little swine's meat, makes the whole dish to be no man's meat, but swine's meat. Our Church according to Vincentius his rule admits a growth or proficiency in Faith, in that it holds not only those propositions which are expressly contained in Scripture, but such as may by necessary consequence be deduced out of them, for points of Faith, and this growth is still in *eodem genere*, from the same root. Other points of Faith besides these, our Church admitteth none, but ties even her Prelates and Governors, to obtrude no other doctrines as points of Faith upon their auditors, than such as are either expressly contained in Scriptures, or may infallibly be deduced from them. And this is the fundamental and radical difference between our Church and the Romish Church, which admitteth such an illimited increase or growth of Faith as is in heaps or congeists of Heterogeneals.

The pain-worthiest inquiry in this argument, were first to make search what additions, or adinventions unto the ancient or primitive Canon of Catholic Faith have been made, received or authorized by the Romish Church, since the Council of Ephesus, which was some three years before Vincentius Lirinensis wrote his admonitions concerning this point; and in what age and upon what occasions, such additions have been made or received. Secondly, to make proof or demonstration, how far and in what manner such additions do corrupt or contaminate the holy Catholic Faith; and how far each or all of them, jointly or severally, do undermine or overthrow the holy Catholic Faith.

The first addition or adinvention of moment, which comes into my memory, is the invocation of Saints and veneration of images. Both which points were added as Articles of Faith or parts of the Creed, which all were bound to believe and profess by Tharasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and President of that illiterate, parasitical and factious assembly, which hath been commonly styled the seventh general or second Nicene Council. In these and the like abominable decrees the then Bishop of Rome was Tharasius's accomplice, his instigator and abettor, as may appear from the speeches of his Legates in that Council, and by his own Epistles, although part of the Epistle may be justly suspected to have been framed since. But by what spirit this Council was managed, or in whose name they met together. I refer the reader unto that learned Treatise in the Book of Homilies (whereunto we have all subscribed) concerning the peril of idolatry, especially the third part. What ingenuous minds of this kingdom thought of that Council, before either the author of these Homilies or Luther was born, may in part be gathered from an ancient English Historiographer, who saith the Church of God did hold this decree in execration.

The selfsame points, with a great-many more of like or worse nature, all whatsoever any council which the Romish Church accounteth general or œcumenical, or any Canons which the same Church accounteth Catholic, even all decrees whereto the Trent Council hath affixed their Anathemas, have been annexed by Pius Quartus to the Nicene Creed, and are inserted as principal points of that oath which every Roman Bishop at his consecration is to take; one part of which oath or solemn vow it likewise is, that every Bishop shall exact the like confession of his inferiors to be ratified by oath or solemn vow, *Cætera omnia à sacris, &c.*

The particular decree concerning invocation of Saints and adoration of images, is much enlarged by the Trent Council, and by Pius Quartus. But of the equivalency of idolatry in Rome Heathen, and Rome Christian, elsewhere at large. In this one point, to omit others, the present Romish Church far exceeds the

Eastern Church, in the time of the second Nicene Council, in that it ratifies the worshipping of all such Saints as are canonized by the Pope.

The second addition made by the Roman Church unto the ancient Canon of Faith, is a transcendant one, and illimited; and that is, the making of Ecclesiastical tradition to be an integral part of the Canon of Faith. This doth not only pollute, but undermine the whole fabric of the holy, primitive and Catholic Faith. That there is a certain rule or authentic Canon of Faith, is a principle, wherein the ancient primitive Church, the modern Roman, and all reformed Churches agree. The first point of difference betwixt us, is about the extent of the written Canon, especially of the old Testament. The main points of difference are these. First, we affirm with antiquity, and in particular with Vincentius Lirinensis, that the Canon of Scripture is a rule of Faith, perfect for quantity, and sufficient for quality; that is, it contains all things in it, that are necessary to salvation, or requisite to be contained in any rule; and so contains them as they may be believed and understood, without relying on any other rule or authority equivalent to them in certainty, or more authentic in respect of us, than the Scriptures are. The modern Romish Church denies the Canon of Scripture to be perfect and complete in respect of its quantity, or sufficient for its quality or efficacy. To supply the defect of its quantity, they add tradition, as another part of the same rule, homogeneal and equivalent to it for quality. To supply the insufficiency as well of Canonical Scriptures as of tradition in respect of their quality or efficacy towards us, they add the infallible authority of the present visible Church. The former addition of unwritten tradition as part of the infallible rule doth undermine: this latter addition of the Church's infallible and absolute authority as well in determining the extent, as in declaring the true sense and meaning of the whole rule, utterly pulls down the structure of Faith: yet when we reject Ecclesiastical tradition from being any part of the rule of Faith, we do not altogether deny the authority or use of it. Howbeit that Ecclesiastical tradition, whereof there was such excellent use in the primitive

Church, was not unwritten tradition, or customs commended or ratified by the supposed infallibility of any visible Church. That Ecclesiastical tradition which Vincentius Lirinensis so much commends, did especially consist in the confessions or registers of particular Churches. Now the unanimous consent of so many several Churches, as exhibited their confessions to the Nicene Council, being not dependent one of another, not overruled by authority, nor misled by faction to frame the confessions of their Faith by imitation, or according to some pattern set them, but voluntarily and freely exhibiting such confessions as had been framed and taught before these controversies arose, was a pregnant argument to any impartial, understanding man, that this Faith wherein they all agreed, had been delivered unto them by the Apostles and their followers, by the first planters of the Churches thus agreeing; a pregnant argument, likewise, that these first planters had been inspired and taught by one and the same Spirit. Each particular Church was a competent or authentic witness of every other Church's integrity and fidelity *in servando depositum*, in carefully preserving the truth committed to their special trust. On the contrary, in that Arius, Eutyches, Nestorius, and other Heretics, did obtrude such constructions of Scriptures upon their auditors as had nowhere been heard of before, but sprung up with themselves, or from the places where they lived, this was an argument more than probable, that if the Apostles had delivered the whole form of wholesome doctrine unto posterity, (a point questioned by no Church in those times) these men, or the particular Churches which abetted them, had not kept the doctrine delivered unto them by our SAVIOUR and His Apostles; but had corrupted or defiled it with the idle fancies of their own brains, or with the muddy conceit of their discontented passions.

To speak more briefly, though perhaps more fully: the unanimous consent of so many distinct visible Churches; as exhibited their several confessions, catechisms, or testimonies of their own and their forefathers' Faith, unto the four first Œcumenical Councils, was an argument of the same force and

efficacy, against Arius and other Heretics, for whose conviction these Councils were called, as the general consent and practice of all nations in worshipping some Divine power or other, hath been, in all ages, against the Atheists. Nothing, besides the ingrafted notion of a Deity or Divine power, could have inclined so many several nations, so much different in natural disposition, in civil discipline and education, to affect or practice the duty of adoration. Nothing besides the evidence of truth delivered unto the Christian world by CHRIST and His Apostles, could have kept so many several Churches, as communicated their confessions unto the Councils of Nice and Ephesus, &c. in the unity of the same Faith.

Howbeit this unanimous tradition Ecclesiastic, was not in these times held for any proper part of the rule of Faith, but alleged only as an inducement to incline the hearts of such as before acknowledged the written word for the only rule of Faith, to believe that the interpretations or decisions of those Councils, did contain the true sense and meaning of the rule acknowledged by all. So that the written tradition which Vincentius so much commends, was not by the Nicene Council used to any such purpose as the Romanists now use unwritten traditions. The only use of it was to direct the present Church in her examination of the Catholic truth, or points of Faith. The chief authority which the visible Church then challenged, did consist in the unanimous consent of the Ecclesiastic tradition, and that (as was said before) but an inducement to embrace the interpretations of the present Church, and reject the interpretations of upstart Heretics.

But was it a received truth in these primitive times, or a truth acknowledged by Vincentius, (the pretended patron of Roman Catholic tradition) that the joint consent of so many Bishops, as were assembled in the first Council of Nice, or the joint confessions of so many several Dioceses as were then delivered to that Council, should unto the world's end, continue an argument or inducement of like force or validity, as it then was, either for establishment of the Canons which succeeding Councils should make, or for condemning such opinions as with the consent of

as many (or more) Bishops, as were there assembled, should be condemned for Heresies? No, the same Vincentius hath given posterity a caveat, as full of wisdom, as of religion; in some cases not to admit of his former admonition, concerning the trial of Catholic Faith, either for refelling Heresies, or for establishing the truth. The limitation of his former admonition is, in his own words, thus. As for ancient and inveterate Heresies, they are not in any wise to be refuted by the former method, because continuance of time (after Heresies be once set on foot) may afford Heretics many opportunities of stealing truth out of the writings of the ancient, or for exchanging orthodoxal antiquity with profane novelties.

Now what opportunities of falsification did these eight hundred years last past afford, which the Roman Church was not always ready to take? The opportunities afforded by dissolution of the Roman Empire and variance of Christian Kings, first made the Roman Clergy such sacrilegious thieves, as Vincentius supposeth any opportunity may make Heretics to be. And the Roman Church, being flesht with the spoil of CHRIST'S flock and Christian Churches through the West, have not been wanting unto themselves in devising new opportunities in coining a new act of falsifying antiquity, of stealing the consent and suffrages of the Christian world, from orthodoxal and primitive truth. So that if this controversy may be examined and discussed by Vincentius's rules, since the first acknowledgment of the Pope's supremacy, since the making of edicts for the acknowledging of it, since the exemption of Clerks from royal or civil jurisdiction; all the written testimonies, or unwritten traditions, which the children of the Romish Church do or can rake together, are void in law, and void in conscience: there is not so much as one legal single testimony, but all are as a multitude of false and illegal witnesses, of parties or conspirators in their own cause.

But although Heresies of long standing and continuance cannot be refuted, nor may not be assaulted, in Vincentius's judgment, by the former method, that is, by multitude of suffragants, or joint consent of several Provinces, is there therefore no other

means left to convince them, no way left to eschew them? Yes, we may eschew them, (saith he), as already condemned by ancient and orthodoxal Councils; or we may convince them, so it be needful or expedient, by the sole authority of Scriptures. Now if the Scriptures be sufficient to convince Heresies of long continuance or long standing, and to confute such Heretics, as want neither wit, will, nor opportunity to falsify ancient records, and imprint traditions of their own coining with inscriptions of antiquity, I hope the same Scripture was (in Vincentius's judgment) a rule of Faith neither incomplete for its quantity, nor insufficient for its quality: a rule every way competent for ending controversies in Religion, without the assumption either of tradition or Decrees of Council, as any associates or homogeneal parts of the same rule.

Unto what use then did Ecclesiastical tradition, or general Councils serve for quelling Heresies? Ecclesiastical traditions or unanimous consent of particular Churches throughout several Kingdoms or Provinces in points of Faith, was in ancient times and yet may be an excellent means, by which the Spirit of God leads general Councils into the truth. And the Councils whose care and office it was to compare and examine traditions exhibited, were the sovereign and principal means, under the guidance of God's Spirit, by which as many as embraced the love of truth, were led into all those truths, which are at all times necessary to salvation, but were much questioned and obscured by the jugglings and falsifications of former Heretics. Into the same truths which these Councils were then, we now are led, not by relying upon the sole authority of the Councils which the Spirit did lead, but by tracing their footsteps, and viewing the way by which the Spirit did lead them. And this was, by necessary deductions or consequences, which reason, enlightened by the Spirit, and directed by the sweet disposition of Divine Providence, did teach them to make, and doth enable us to judge that they were truly made by them. — Vol. iii. p. 888.

MEDE, PRESBYTER.—*Epistle lxxx. to Mr. Hartlib.*

It grieves me not a little, yea perplexes me, to hear that Mr. Dury is come off with no better success from my L I am loth *malè augurari* ; but I like it not. I fear it is *mali ominis*, and that our State and Church have no mind to put their hand to this work : *Deus avertat omen!* But our Church, you know, goes upon differing principles from the rest of the Reformed, and so steers her course by another rule than they do. We look after the form, rites and discipline of antiquity, and endeavour to bring our own as near as we can to that pattern. We suppose the Reformed Churches have departed farther therefrom than needed, and so we are not very solicitous to comply with them ; yea, we are jealous of such of our own as we see over-zealously addicted to them, lest it be a sign they prefer them before their Mother. This, I suppose, you have observed, and that this disposition in our Church is of late very much increased. Well then, if this union sought after be like to further and advantage us in the way we affect, we shall listen to it. If it be like to be prejudicial, as namely to give strength and authority to those amongst us who are enamoured with the foreign platform, or bring a yoke upon our own by limiting and making us obnoxious ; we'll stand aloof and not meddle with it, lest we infringe our liberty.—*Works*, book iv. p. 865.

USSHER, ARCHBISHOP.—*On the Universality of the Church of Christ.*

That the multitude of teachers dispersed over the world, without any such dependency or correspondency, should agree together in laying the foundations of the same faith, is a special work of God's Spirit. And it is "the unity of the spirit" which the Apostle here speaketh of, and exhorteth us to "keep in the bond of peace." Whereas the unity of which our adversaries boast so much (which is nothing else but a wilful suffering of themselves to be led blindfold by one man, who commonly is

more blind than many of themselves) is no fruit of the Spirit, but of mere carnal policy ; and may serve, peradventure, for a "bond of peace" betwixt themselves and their own party, such as the priests of Antichrist were to have, and as many as would be content to yield themselves to the conduct of such a commander, but hath proved the greatest block that ever stood in the way for giving impediment to the peace and unity of the universal Church, which here we look after. And therefore Nilus, Archbishop of Thessalonica, entering into the consideration of the original ground of that long-continued schism, whereby the West standeth as yet divided from the East, and the Latin churches from the Greek, wrote a whole book purposely on this argument, wherein he sheweth "that there is no other cause to be assigned of this distraction, but that the Pope will not permit the cognizance of the controversy unto a General Council, but will needs sit himself as the alone teacher of the point in question, and have others hearken unto him as if they were his scholars ; and that this is contrary both to the ordinances and the practice of the Apostles and the Fathers." Neither indeed is there any hope that ever we shall see a general peace for matters of religion settled in the Christian world, as long as this supercilious master shall be suffered to keep this rule in God's house, how much soever he be magnified by his own disciples, and made the only foundation upon which the unity of the Catholic Church dependeth.

Now in the next place, for the further opening of the "unity of faith," we are to call unto mind the distinction which the Apostle maketh betwixt *the foundation* and that which is *buildd thereupon*, betwixt the *principles of the doctrine of CHRIST* and that which he calleth perfection. The "unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" here spoken of hath reference, as we have heard, to the foundation ; as that which followeth, of a "perfect man," and "the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST," to the superstruction and perfection. In the former there is a general *unity* among all true believers ; in the latter a great deal of *variety* ; there being several degrees of perfection to be found in several persons, "according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST." So we see in a material building that still there

is but one foundation, though great disparity be observed in sundry parts of the superstruction; some rooms are high, some low, some dark, some lightsome, some more substantially, some more slightly builded, and in tract of time some prove more ruinous than others; yet all of them belong to one building, as long as they hold together and stand upon the same foundation. And even thus is it in the spiritual building also, whether we respect the *practical* part of Christianity or the *intellectual*. In the practical we see wonderful great difference betwixt Christian and Christian; some by God's mercy attain to a higher measure of perfection, and keep themselves unspotted from the common corruptions of the world: others watch not so carefully, &c.

The oracles of God contain abundance of matter in them, and whatsoever is found in them is a fit subject for faith to apprehend; but that all Christians should uniformly agree in the profession of those truths that are revealed there, is a thing that rather may be wished than ever hoped for. Yet the variety of men's judgments in those many points that belong to theological faith, doth not dissolve the unity which they hold together in the fundamental principles of the Catholic faith. The "unity of faith" commended here is a Catholic unity, and such as every Christian attaineth unto. "Till we ALL come in the unity of faith," saith the Apostle. As there is a *common salvation*, so is there a *common faith*, which is *alike precious* in the highest Apostle and the meanest believer. For we may not think that heaven was prepared for deep clerks only, and therefore beside that larger measure of knowledge whereof all are not capable, there must be "a rule of faith common to small and great," which, as it must consist of few propositions (for simple men cannot bear away many), so is it also requisite that those articles should be of so much weight and moment, that they may be sufficient to make a man "wise unto salvation;" that howsoever in other points learned men may go beyond common Christians, and exceed one another likewise by many degrees, yet in respect of these radical truths which is the necessary and common food of all the children of the Church, there is not an unity only but such a kind of equality also, brought in among all sorts of Christians, as was heretofore

among the congregation of the Israelites in the collection of their manna, where "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack."

If then salvation by believing these common principles may be had, and to salvation none can come that is not first a member of the Catholic Church of Christ, it followeth thereupon, that "the unity of the faith" generally requisite for the incorporating of Christians into that blessed society is not to be extended beyond those common principles which may further be made manifest unto us by the continual practice of the Catholic Church herself in the matriculation of her children and the first admittance of them into her communion; for when she prepared her Catechumeni for baptism, and by that door received them into the congregation of Christ's flock, we may not think her judgment to have been so weak that she should omit anything herein that was essentially necessary for the making of one to be a member of the Church. Now, the profession which she required of all that were to receive baptism, was for the *Agenda*, or practical part, an ab-renunciation of the devil, the world, and the flesh, with all their sinful works and lusts; and for the *Credenda*, the things to be believed, an acknowledgment of the Articles of the Creed; which being solemnly done, she then baptized them "in this faith;" intimating thereby sufficiently that this was that "one faith" commended unto her by the Apostles, as the other that "one baptism" which was appointed to be the Sacrament of it.

This Creed, though for substance it was the same every where, yet for form was somewhat different, and in some places received more enlargements than in others.

That which in the time of the ancient Fathers was accounted to be "truly and properly Catholic," namely, "that which was believed everywhere, always, and by all," that in the succeeding ages hath evermore been preserved, and is at this day entirely professed in our Church. And it is well observed by a learned man, who hath written a full discourse of this argument, that "Whatsoever the father of lies either hath attempted or shall attempt, yet neither hath he hitherto effected, nor shall ever bring it to pass hereafter, that this Catholic doctrine, ratified by the

common consent of Christians always and everywhere, should be abolished; but that in the thickest mist rather of the most perplexed troubles it still obtained victory, both in the minds and open confession of all Christians, no ways overturned in the foundation thereof; and that in this verity that one Church of Christ was preserved in the midst of the tempests of the most cruel winter, or in the thickest darkness of her wanings."

Thus, if at this day we should take a survey of the several professions of Christianity that have any large spread in any part of the world, as of the religion of the Roman and the Reformed Churches in our quarters, of the Egyptians and the Ethiopians in the south, of the Grecians and other Christians in the eastern parts, and should put by the points wherein they did differ one from another, and gather into one body the rest of the articles wherein they all did generally agree, we should find, that in those propositions which without all controversy are universally received in the whole Christian world, so much truth is contained as, being joined with holy obedience, may be sufficient to bring a man unto everlasting salvation. Neither have we cause to doubt, but that "as many as do walk according to this rule," (neither overthrowing that which they have builded by superinducing any *damnable heresies* thereupon, nor otherwise vitiating their "*holy faith*" with a lewd and wicked conversation) "peace shall be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

Now these common principles of the Christian faith, which we call *κοινότητες* or things *generally believed* of all, as they have "universality," and "antiquity," and "consent," concurring with them, which by Vincentius's rule are the special characters of that which is truly and properly Catholic; so for their duration we are sure that they have still held out, and been kept as the seminary of the Catholic Church in the darkest and difficultest times that ever have been: where, if the Lord of hosts had not in his mercy reserved this seed unto us, we should long since "have been as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah." It cannot be denied indeed, that Satan and his instruments have used their utmost endeavour either to hide this light from men's

eyes by keeping them in gross ignorance, or to deprave it by bringing in pernicious heresies ; and that in these latter ages they have much prevailed both ways, as well in the West and North as in the East and South. Yet far be it, for all this, from any man to think that “ God should so cast away his people,” that in those times, there should not be left “ a remnant according to the election of Grace.”

The Christian Church was never brought unto a lower ebb than was the Jewish synagogue in the days of our Saviour CHRIST, when, &c. pp. 700—713.

BRAMHALL, ARCHBISHOP AND CONFESSOR.—*Answer to de la Militiere.*

If your intention be only to invite his Majesty to embrace the Catholic Faith, you might have spared both your oil and labour. The Catholic Faith flourished one thousand two hundred years in the world, before Transubstantiation was defined among yourselves. Persons better acquainted with the Primitive times than yourself (unless you wrong one another) do acknowledge that the Fathers did not touch either the word or the matter of Transubstantiation. Mark it well, neither Name nor Thing. His Majesty doth firmly believe all supernatural Truth revealed in Sacred Writ. He embraceth cheerfully whatsoever the holy Apostles, or the Nicene Fathers, or blessed Athanasius, in their respective Creeds or Summaries of Catholic Faith did set down as necessary to be believed. He is ready to receive whatsoever the Catholic Church of this Age doth unanimously believe to be a particle of saving Truth.

But if you seek to obtrude upon him the Roman Church, with its adherents, for the Catholic Church, excluding three parts of four of the Christian world from the communion of CHRIST ; or the Opinions thereof, for Articles and Fundamentals of Catholic Faith, neither his reason, nor his Religion, nor his Charity, will suffer him to listen unto you. The truths received by our Church, are sufficient, in point of Faith, to make him a good Catholic. More than this, your Roman Bishops, your Roman

Church, your Tridentine Council, may not, cannot, obtrude upon him. Listen to the Third General Council, that of Ephesus, which decreed, that it should be lawful for no man to publish or compose another Faith or Creed than that which was defined by the Nicene Council; and that whosoever should dare to compose or offer any such to any persons willing to be converted from Paganism, Judaism, or Heresy, if they were Bishops or Clerks, should be deposed; if Laymen, should be anathematised.

Suffer us to enjoy the same Creed the Primitive Fathers did, which none will say to have been insufficient, except they be mad, as was alleged by the Greeks in the Council of Florence. You have violated this Canon, you have obtruded a New Creed upon Christendom. New I say, not in words only, but in sense also.

Some things are *de Symbolo*, some things are *contra Symbolum*, and some things are only *præter Symbolum*. Some things are contained in the Creed, either expressly or virtually, either in the letter or in the sense, and may be deduced by evident consequence from the Creed, as the Deity of CHRIST, his Two Natures, the Procession of the Holy Ghost. The addition of these was properly no addition, but an explication; yet such an explication, no person, no assembly, under an Œcumenical Council, can impose upon the Catholic Church. And such an one your Tridentine Synod was not.

Secondly, some things are *contra Symbolum*, contrary to the Symbolical Faith, and either expressly or virtually overthrow some article of it. These additions are not only unlawful, but heretical also in themselves, and after conviction render a man a formal Heretic; whether some of your additions be not of this nature, I will not now dispute.

Thirdly, some things are neither of the Faith, nor against the Faith, but only besides the Faith; that is, opinions or truths of an inferior nature, which are not so necessary to be actually known; for though all revealed truths be alike necessary to be believed when they are known, yet all revealed truths are not alike necessary to be known. It is not denied, but that General or Provincial Councils may make constitutions concerning these for

Unity and Uniformity, and oblige all such as are subject to their jurisdiction to receive them, either actively, or passively, without contumacy or opposition. But to make these, or any of these, a part of the Creed, and to oblige all Christians under pain of damnation to know and believe them, is really to add to the Creed, and to change the Symbolical, Apostolical Faith, to which none can add, from which none can take away, and comes within the compass of St. Paul's curse : " If we, or an angel from Heaven, shall preach unto you any other Gospel (or Faith) than that which we have preached, let him be accursed." Such are, your universality of the Roman Church, by the institution of CHRIST, (to make her the Mother of her Grandmother the Church of Jerusalem, and the Mistress of her many elder Sisters) your doctrine of Purgatory and Indulgences, and the worship of Images, and all other Novelties defined in the Council of Trent, all of which are comprehended in your New Roman Creed, and obruded by you upon all the world to be believed upon pain of damnation. He that can extract all these out of the old Apostolic Creed, must needs be an excellent chymist, and may safely undertake to draw water out of a pumice.—*Works*, p. 22.

Concerning the proper expounders of Scripture, we do believe that the Gospel doth not consist in the words, but in the sense ; *non in superficie, sed in medullá* ; and therefore that, though this infallible rule be given for the common benefit of all, yet, every one is not an able or fit artist to make application of this rule, in all particular cases. To preserve the common right, and yet prevent particular abuses, we distinguish judgment into three kinds :

Judgment of Discretion ; Judgment of Direction ; and Judgment of Jurisdiction.

As in the former instance of the law (the ignorance whereof excuseth no man) every subject hath judgment of discretion, to apply it particularly to the preservation of himself, his estate and interest ; the advocates, and those who are skilful in the law, have moreover a judgment of direction, to advise others of less knowledge and experience ; but those who are constituted by the sovereign power, to determine emergent difficulties, and

differences, and to distribute and administer justice to the whole body of a Province or Kingdom, have moreover a Judgment of Jurisdiction, which is not only discretionary, or directive, but authoritative, to impose an obligation of obedience unto those who are under their charge. If these last shall transgress the Rule of the Law, they are not accountable to their inferiors, but to him or them that have the Sovereign power of Legislative Judicature; *Ejus est legem interpretari, cujus est condere.*

To apply this to the case in question concerning the exposition of the Holy Scripture. Every Christian keeping himself within the bounds of due obedience and submission to his lawful superiors, hath a Judgment of Discretion; "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." He may apply the rule of Holy Scripture for his own private instruction, comfort, edification, and direction, and for the framing of his life and belief accordingly. The Pastors of the Church (who are placed over God's people as watchmen and guides) have more than this, a Judgment of Direction, to expound and interpret the Holy Scriptures to others, and out of them to instruct the ignorant, to reduce them who wander out of the right way, to confute errors, to foretell dangers, and to draw sinners to repentance. The chief Pastors, to whose care the regiment of the Church is committed in a more special manner, have yet an higher degree of judgment, a Judgment of Jurisdiction, to prescribe, to enjoin, to constitute, to reform, to censure, to condemn, to bind, to loose, judicially, authoritatively, in their respective charges. If their Key shall err, either their key of knowledge, or their key of jurisdiction, they are accountable to their respective superiors, and in the last place to a General Council, which under CHRIST, upon earth, is the highest Judge of controversies. Thus we have seen what is the Rule of Faith, and by whom, and how far respectively, this Rule is to be applied.—

This hath always been the doctrine, and the practice of our English Church; First, it is so far from admitting Laymen to be Directive Interpreters of Holy Scripture, that it allows not this liberty to clergymen so much as to gloss upon the text until they be licensed to become preachers. Secondly, for Judgment of

Discretion only, it gives it not to private persons above their talent, or beyond their last. It disallows all phantastical and enthusiastical presumption of incompetent and unqualified expositors. It admits no man into Holy Orders, that is, to be capable of being made a Directive Interpreter of Scripture, howsoever otherwise qualified, unless he be able to give a good account of his faith in the Latin tongue, so as to be able to frame all his expositions according to the analogy thereof. It forbids the licensed preachers to teach the people any doctrine as necessary to be religiously held and believed, which the Catholic Fathers, and Old Bishops of the Primitive Church have not collected out of the Scriptures. It ascribes a Judgment of Jurisdiction over Preachers to Bishops, in all manner of Ecclesiastical Duties, as appears by the whole body of our Canons. And especially where any difference or public opposition hath been between Preachers about any point or doctrine deduced out of Scripture. It gives a power of determining all emergent controversies of Faith above Bishops to the Church, as to the witness and keeper of the Sacred Oracles; and to a lawful Synod, as the representative Church.

We receive not your upstart supposititious traditions, nor unwritten Fundamentals; but we admit Genuine, Universal, Apostolical Traditions; as the Apostles' Creed, the Perpetual Virginity of the Mother of God, the Anniversary Festivals of the Church, the Lenten Fast. Yet we know that both the duration of it, and the manner of observing it, was very different in the Primitive times. We believe Episcopacy, to an ingenuous person, may be proved out of Scripture without the help of tradition; but to such as are froward, the perpetual practice and tradition of the Church, renders the interpretation of the text more authentic, and the proof more convincing. What is this to us who admit the practice and tradition of the Church, as an excellent help of exposition? Use is the best interpreter of laws, and we are so far from believing, that we cannot admit tradition without allowing the Papacy, that one of the principle motives why we rejected the Papacy, as it is now established with Universality of Jurisdiction, by the Institution of CHRIST, and superiority above Œcu-

menical Councils, and Infallibility of Judgment, was the constant tradition of the Primitive Church.—*Works*, p. 33.

Vindication of the Church of England.

The Communion of the Christian Catholic Church is partly internal, partly external. The internal Communion consists principally in these things: To believe the same entire substance of saving necessary truth revealed by the Apostles, and to be ready implicitly in the preparation of the mind to embrace all other supernatural verities when they shall be sufficiently proposed to them: to judge charitably one of another; to exclude none from the Catholic Communion and hope of Salvation, either Eastern, or Western, or Southern, or Northern Christians, which profess the ancient Faith of the Apostles and Primitive Fathers, established in the first General Councils, and comprehended in the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds; to rejoice at their well-doing, to sorrow for their sins, to condole with them in their sufferings, to pray for their constant perseverance in the true Christian Faith, for their reduction from all their respective errors, and their reunion to the Church in case they be divided from it, that we may be all one sheep-fold under that One Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls; and lastly, to hold an actual External Communion with them *in votis*, in our desires, and to endeavour it by all those means which are in our power. This Internal Communion is of absolute necessity among all Catholics.

External Communion consists first in the same Creeds, or Symbols, or Confessions of Faith, which are the ancient badges or cognizances of Christianity. Secondly, in the participation of the same Sacraments. Thirdly, in the same external worship and frequent use of the same Divine Offices, or Liturgies, or Forms of serving God. Fourthly, in the use of the same public Rites and Ceremonies. Fifthly, in giving communicatory letters from one Church, or one person, to another. And lastly, in admission of the same discipline, and subjection to the same Supreme Ecclesiastical Authority, that is, Episcopacy, or a General Council: for as single Bishops are the heads of particular

churches, so Episcopacy, that is, a General Council, or Œcumenical Assembly of Bishops, is the head of the Universal Church.—*Works*, p. 57.

Replication to the Bishop of Chalcedon's Survey.

No man can justly blame me for honouring my spiritual Mother the Church of England, in whose womb I was conceived, at whose breasts I was nourished, and in whose bosom I hope to die. Bees, by the instinct of nature, do love their hives, and birds their nests. But God is my witness that, according to my uttermost talent and poor understanding, I have endeavoured to set down the naked truth impartially, without either favour or prejudice, the two capital enemies of right judgment. The one of which, like a false mirror, doth represent things fairer and straighter than they are; the other like the tongue, infected with choler, makes the sweetest meats to taste bitter. My desire hath been to have truth for my chiefest friend, and no enemy but error. If I have had any bias, it hath been desire of peace, which our common SAVIOUR left as a legacy to His Church, that I might live to see the reunion of Christendom, for which I shall always bow the knees of my heart to the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is not impossible but that this desire of unity may have produced some unwilling error of love, but certainly I am most free from the wilful love of error. In questions of an inferior nature, CHRIST regards a charitable intention much more than a right opinion.

Howsoever it be, I submit myself and my poor endeavours, First, to the judgment of the Catholic Œcumenical Essential Church, which if some, of late days, have endeavoured to hiss out of the schools as a fancy, I cannot help it. From the beginning it was not so. And if I should mistake the right Catholic Church out of human frailty or ignorance, (which, for my part, I have no reason in the world to suspect; yet it is not impossible, when the Romanists themselves are divided into five or six several opinions, what this Catholic Church, or what their Infallible Judge is) I do implicitly, and in the preparation of my mind,

submit myself to the true Catholic Church, the Spouse of CHRIST, the Mother of the Saints, the Pillar of Truth. And seeing my adherence is firmer to the Infallible Rule of Faith, that is, the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Catholic Church, than to mine own private judgment or opinions; although I should unwittingly fall into an error, yet this cordial submission is an implicit retractation thereof, and I am confident will be so accepted by the Father of mercies, both from me and all others who seriously and sincerely do seek after Peace and Truth.

Likewise I submit myself to the representative Church, that is, a free General Council, or so general as can be procured; and until then to the Church of England wherein I was baptized, or to a National English Synod. To the determination of all which, and each of them respectively, according to the distinct degrees of their authority, I yield a conformity and compliance, or at the least, and to the lowest of them, an acquiescence.

Finally, I crave this favour from the courteous reader, that because the surveyor hath overseen almost all the principal proofs of the cause in question, (which I conceive not to be so clearly and candidly done,) he will take the pains to peruse the vindication itself. And then in the name of GOD let him follow the dictate of right reason. For as that scale must needs settle down whereinto most weight is put, so the mind cannot choose, but yield to the weight of perspicuous demonstration.—
Works, p. 141.

Schism guarded.

The great bustling in the controversy concerning Papal power, or the Discipline of the Church, hath been either about the true sense of some texts of Holy Scripture; as, “thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and to thee will I give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven”, and “feed my sheep”: Or about some privileges conferred upon the Roman See by the Canons of the Fathers, and the Edicts of Emperors, but pretended by the Roman Court, and the maintainers thereof, to be held by Divine right. I endeavour in this treatise to disabuse thee, and to shew that this challenge of Divine right is but a

blind, or diversion, to withhold thee from finding out the true state of the question. So the hare makes her doubles and her jumps before she comes to her form, to hinder tracers from finding her out.

I demonstrate to thee, that the true controversy is not concerning St. Peter, we have no formed difference about St. Peter, nor about any point of Faith, but of interest and profit; nor with the Church of Rome, but with the Court of Rome, and wherein it doth consist, namely, in these questions; who shall confer English Bishopricks? who shall convocate English Synods? who shall receive Tenths, and First-fruits, and Oaths of Allegiance and Fidelity? Whether the Pope can make binding laws in England, without the consent of the King and Kingdom, or dispense with English Laws at his own pleasure, or call English subjects to Rome without the Prince's leave, or set up Legantine Courts in England against their wills? And this I shew not out of the opinions of particular authors, but out of the public laws of the Kingdom.

I prove, moreover, out of our Fundamental Laws, and the writings of our best Historiographers, that all these branches of Papal power were abuses, and innovations, and usurpations, first attempted to be introduced into England above eleven hundred years after CHRIST; with the names of the innovators, and the precise time when each innovation began, and the opposition that was made against it by our Kings, by our Bishops, by our Peers, by our Parliaments, with the groans of the Kingdom under these Papal innovations and extortions.

Likewise, in point of doctrine, thou hast been instructed that the Catholic Faith doth comprehend all those points which are controverted between us and the Church of Rome, without the express belief whereof no Christian can be saved: whereas, in truth, all these are but opinions, yet some more dangerous than others. If none of them had ever been started in the world there is sufficient to salvation for points to be believed in the Apostles' Creed. Into this Apostolical Faith professed in the Creed, and explicated by the four first General Councils, and only into this faith we have all been baptized. Far be it from

us to imagine, that the Catholic Church hath ever more baptized, and doth still baptize but into one half of the Christian Faith.

In sum, doth thou desire to live in the communion of the true Catholic Church? So do I. But as I dare not change the cognizance of my christianity, that is, my Creed, nor enlarge the Christian Faith (I mean the essentials of it) beyond those bounds which the Apostles have set, so I dare not (to serve the interest of the Roman Court) limit the Catholic Church, which CHRIST hath purchased with his blood, to a fourth or a fifth part of the Christian world.

Thou art for tradition, so am I. But my tradition is not the tradition of one particular Church contradicted by the tradition of another Church, but the universal and perpetual tradition of the Christian world united. Such a tradition is a full proof, which is received *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*; always, everywhere, and by all Christians. Neither do I look upon the opposition of an handful of heretics (they are no more, being compared to the innumerable multitudes of Christians,) in one or two ages, as inconsistent with universality, any more than the highest mountains are inconsistent with the roundness of the earth.

Thou desirest to bear the same respect to the Church of Rome that thy ancestors did; so do I. But for that fulness of power, yea, co-active power in the exterior Court, over the subjects of other Princes, and against their wills, devised by the Court of Rome, not by the Church of Rome; it is that pernicious source from whence all these usurpations did spring. Our ancestors from time to time made laws against it; and our Reformation, in point of Discipline, being rightly understood, was but a pursuing of their steps. The true controversy is, whether the Bishop of Rome ought, by Divine right, to have the external regiment of the English Church, and co-active jurisdiction in English Courts, over English subjects, against the will of the King and the Laws of the Kingdom.—*Works*, p. 289.

Ibid.

As for Essentials of Faith, the pillars of the earth are not

founded more firmly than our belief upon that undoubted rule of Vincentius, *Quicquid ubique semper et ab omnibus, &c.* Whatsoever we believe as an Article of our Faith, we have for it the testimony and approbation of the whole Christian world of all ages, and therein the Church of Rome itself. But they have no such perpetual or universal tradition for their twelve new Articles of Pope Pius. This objection would have become me much better than him. Whatsoever we believe, they believe, and all the Christian world of all places, and all ages, doth now believe, and ever did believe, except condemned heretics. But they endeavour to obtrude new essentials of Faith upon the Christian world which have no such perpetual or such universal tradition. He that accuseth another, should have an eye to himself.

Does not all the world see that the Church of England stands now otherwise in order to the Church of Rome, than it did in Henry the Seventh's days? He addeth further, that it is confessed that the Papal power in Ecclesiastical affairs was cast out of England in Henry the Eighth's days. I answer that there was no mutation concerning Faith, nor concerning any legacy which CHRIST left to His Church, nor concerning the power of the Keys, or any jurisdiction purely spiritual, but concerning co-active power in the Exterior Court, concerning the Political or External Regiment of the Church, concerning the Patronage or Civil Sovereignty over the Church of England, and the Legislative, Judiciary, and Dispensative power of the Pope in England, over English subjects, which was no more than a reinfranchisement of ourselves, from the upstart usurpations of the Court of Rome, of all which I have shewed him expressly the first source, who began them, when, and where; before which he is not able to give one instance of any such practices attempted by the Bishop of Rome, and admitted by the Church of England.—*Works*, p. 342.

SANDERSON, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.

Nor will their flying to tradition help them in this case, or free them from Pharisaism; but rather make the more against them. For to omit that it hath been the usual course of false

teachers, when their doctrines were found not to be Scripture-proof, to fly to tradition: do but inquire a little into the original and growth of Pharisaical traditions, and you shall find that one egg is not more like another, than the Papists and the Pharisees are alike in this matter. When Sadoc (or whosoever else was the first author of the sect of the Sadducees) and his followers began to vent their pestilent and Atheistical doctrines against the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and other like: the best learned among the Jews, (the Pharisees especially) opposed against them by arguments and collections drawn from the Scriptures. The Sadducees finding themselves unable to hold argument with them, (as having two shrewd disadvantages; but a little learning, and a bad cause;) had no other means to avoid the force of all their arguments, than to hold them precisely to the letter of the text, without admitting any exposition thereof, or collection therefrom. Unless they could bring clear text, that should affirm *totidem verbis* what they denied, they would not yield. The Pharisees on the contrary refused (as they had good cause) to be tied to such unreasonable conditions; but stood upon the meaning of the Scriptures, as the Sadducees did upon the letter; confirming the truth of their interpretations partly from reason, and partly from tradition. Not meaning by tradition (as yet) any doctrine other than what was already sufficiently contained in the Scriptures; but merely the doctrine which had been in all ages constantly taught and received with an universal consent among the people of God, as consonant to the Holy Scriptures, and grounded thereon. By this means, though they could not satisfy the Sadducees (as Heretics and Sectaries commonly are obstinate), yet so far they satisfied the generality of the people, that they grew into very great esteem with them; and within a while carried all before them: the detestation of the Sadducees and of their loose errors also conducing not a little thereunto. And who now but the Pharisees: and what now but tradition? in every man's eye and mouth. Things being at this pass, any wise man may judge, how easy a matter it was for men so revered as the Pharisees were, to abuse the credulity of the people and the

interest they had in their good opinion, to their own advantage ; to make themselves lords of the people's faith, and by little and little to bring into the worship whatsoever doctrines and observances they pleased ; and all under the acceptable name of the traditions of the Elders. And so they did, winning continually upon the people by their cunning and shows of religion, and proceeding still more and more, till the Jewish worship by their means was grown to that height of superstition and formality, as we see it was in our SAVIOUR's days. Such was the beginning, and such the rise, of those Pharisaical traditions.

Popish traditions also came in and grew up just after the same manner. The orthodox Bishops and Doctors in the ancient Church, being to maintain the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, the Hypostatical union of the two natures in the Person of Christ, the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, and other like articles of the Catholic Religion against the Arians, Eunomians, Macedonians, and other Heretics ; for that the words Trinity, Homousion, Hypostasis, Procession, &c. (which for the better expressing of the Catholic sense they were forced to use), were not expressly to be found in the Holy Scriptures ; had recourse, therefore, very often in their writings against the Heretics of their times, to the tradition of the Church. Whereby they meant not (as the Papists would now wrest their words) any unwritten doctrine not contained in the Scriptures, but the very doctrine of the Scriptures themselves, as they had been constantly understood and believed by all faithful Christians in the Catholic Church, down from the Apostles' times till the several present ages wherein they lived. This course of theirs, of so serviceable and necessary use in those times, gave the first occasion and after-rise to that heap of errors and superstitions, which in process of time (by the power and policy of the Bishop of Rome especially), were introduced into the Christian Church under the specious name and colour of Catholic traditions. Thus have they trodden in the steps of their forefathers the Pharisees ; and stand guilty even as they of the superstition here condemned by

our SAVIOUR, in teaching for doctrines, men's precepts.—*Ad Clerum*, v. p. 85.

COSIN, BISHOP—*Preface to his Notes on the Common Prayer.*

In truth we have continued the old religion; and the ceremonies which we have taken from them that were before us, are not things which belong to this or that sect, but they are the ancient rites and customs of the Church of Christ, whereof ourselves being a part, we have the selfsame interest in them, which our fathers before us had, from whom the same descended to us. To abrogate these things without constraint of apparent harm thence arising, had been to alter unjustly the universal practice of the people of God, and those general decrees of the Fathers, which (in St. Augustin's language) is madness and insolence to do, both in respect of the universal authority of the Church, which no particular Church has power to controul, and also in regard of reasons before mentioned.—p. 50. (*in Nicholls' Commentary.*)

Ibid.—*Judgment betwixt the Church of England and Church of Rome.*

If the Roman Catholics would make the essence of their Church (as we do ours) to consist in the following points, we are at accord with them: in the reception and belief ofthe unanimous and general consent of the ancient Catholic Fathers, and the Universal Church of CHRIST in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and the collection of all necessary matters of faith from them, during the first six centuries downwards to our own day¹.

HAMMOND, PRESBYTER AND CONFESSOR.—*Of Heresy.*

1. This then being the adequate object of the Christian's Faith, those verities which have been revealed to us by God to be thus believed to righteousness, called therefore *ὑγιαίνοντες λόγοι*, words

¹ Vide Bp. Hicckes's Letters, vol. i. Ap. paper iv.

not only true but wholesome, the belief whereof is required in order to our souls' health; the next enquiry is, how we that live in the same distance from CHRIST and His Apostles in respect of time, that we are situate from heaven, which now contains CHRIST, in respect of place, may come within the reach of these revelations of CHRIST, or to any competent undoubted assurance, that those are such indeed, which are pretended to be so.

2. And to this also my concession shall be as liberal as any Romanist can wish, that there are *two* ways of conveying such revelations to us; one in writing, the other by oral tradition; the former in the Gospels and other writings of the Apostles, &c. which makes up the Sacred Writ, or Canon of the New Testament; the latter in the Apostles' preaching to all the Churches of their plantations, which are nowhere set down for us in the Sacred Writ, but conserved as *deposita* by them to whom they were entrusted.

3. And although in sundry respects the former of these be much the more faithful, steady way of conveyance, and for want thereof many things may possibly have perished, or been changed by their passage through many hands, thus much being on these grounds confest by Bellarmine himself, that the Scripture is the most certain and safe rule of belief; yet there being no less veracity in the tongues, than the hands, in the preachings, than the writings of the Apostles; nay, *Prior sermo quam liber, prior sensus quam stylus*, saith Tertullian, the Apostles preacht before they writ, planted Churches before they adrest Epistles to them: on these grounds I make no scruple to grant, that Apostolical traditions, such as are truly so, as well as Apostolical writings, are equally the matter of a Christian's belief; who is equally secured by the fidelity of the conveyance, that as one is Apostolical writing, so the other is Apostolical tradition.

§ IV. 1. Next then the enquiry must proceed by examining what is this equal way of conveyance, common to both these, upon strength of which we become obliged to receive such or such a tradition for Apostolical.

2. And this again is acknowledged not to be any Divine testimony; for God hath nowhere affirmed in Divine Writ, that the

Epistle, inscribed of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, consisting of so many periods as now it is in our Bibles, was ever written by that Apostle, nor are there any inward characters or signatures, or beams of light in the writing itself, that can be admitted, or pretended for testimonies of this, any more than the like may exact to be admitted as witnesses, that the Creed called the Apostles, was indeed in the full sense of it, delivered to the Churches.

3. It remains then, that herein on both sides we rest content with human testimonies of undoubted authority, or such as there is not any rational motive to distrust, and of which alone the matter is capable. For as in case of question concerning the Epistle to the Romans, whether this be it, which was address by St. Paul to that Church, the only regular way of satisfying the question, is, 1st, By devolution or appeal to the authority of those Fathers and Councils, to whom it was *de facto* sufficiently testified and approved, (viz. by examination of the records of that Church to whom it was written, and by whom received, through the hands of some trusty messenger of that Apostle, such as Phœbe that ministered unto him, and by other creditable ways of confirmation) and 2ndly, and by that consequence, to those very original records and proofs of undoubted fidelity: so the way of trial of any tradition, pretended to be Apostolical, whether it be such or no, is by devolving it to those same, or the like Fathers and Councils, which having occasion and commodity to examine the truth of the matter by the records or testimonies of those Churches, to which it was delivered, found it sufficiently testified by them, that it was in truth according as is pretended.

4. And from hence it follows, that as we of this age have no other way of judging of the Canon of Scripture, or of any book, or chapter, or period contained in it, but by the affirmation and authority of those testifiers in the first ages of the Church, either by their writings, or by the unquestioned relations of others, brought down and made known to us; so are we as unable to judge of Apostolical traditions unwritten, whether this or that doctrine be such or no, unless it be thus by the

undoubted affirmations of the ancients (who are presumable by their antiquity to know the truth; and by their uniform consent, neither to mistake themselves, nor to deceive us;) communicated and conveyed to us.

5. 'Tis not possible for any man or men of the greatest understandings or integrity, to see or know what is not done within the reach of their faculties, unless either they be inspired by God, or otherwise informed either mediately or immediately from those, who had really knowledge of it. Stories of former times are not wont to be written by the strength of men's natural parts, invention, or judgment, but only by consulting of those records, either dead or living, by whose help such matters of fact have been preserved. Every thing else is but conjecture, and that very uncertain, the utmost probability in such matters being little worth, that being oftentimes done which really was (and much more to us, who know not the motives of actions far removed from us, is) of all things least probable to have been done. Only a creditable witness, such as no prudent man hath reason to distrust either as nescient or false, is worth considering, or able to found belief in this matter.

§ V. 1. Now then comes the upshot of the inquiry, what qualifications there are of a testimony or testifier, without which, it or he may not be thus deemed creditable, *ὄγκ ἀξιόπιστος* worthy to be believed by a sober Christian; and where these qualifications are to be found, which when we have once resolved, it will also be possible for us to pass some judgment of traditions duly styled Apostolical, which as such must be allowed to be the object of our Faith.

2. And herein I shall hope also that the resolution will be unquestionable, if it be bounded by those three terms, to which Vincentius Lirinensis in his defence of the Catholic Faith against Heresies and innovations hath directed us, *Universitas, Antiquitas, Consensio*, Universality, Antiquity, Consent, viz. That the testimony we depend on, be the result of all, the ancients, consenting, or without any considerable dissent. Or, in yet fewer

words, a Catholic testimony, truly such, *i. e.* universal in all respects; (1) of place, (2) of time, (3) of persons.

3. For first, if it be not testified from all places, it is not qualified for our belief, as Catholic in respect of place, because the Faith being one and the same, and by all and every of the Apostles preached, and deposited in all their plantations, what was ever really thus taught, by any of them in any Church, will also be found to have been taught, and received in all other Apostolical Churches.

4. To which purpose the words of Irenæus are express, lib. i. cap. 3. The Church disseminated over all the world, having received this preaching and this Faith, preserves it diligently, as the inhabitants of the same house, believe them alike, as having the same soul and heart, and teach, and preach, and deliver them alike, as having the same mouth, for though their languages are unlike, the virtue of tradition is one and the same, and neither do the Churches which are found in Germany believe or deliver otherwise than those which were constituted in Spain, in France, in the Orient, in Egypt, in Africk, in the middle of the world, but as one and the same sun shines through the whole world, so doth the light and preaching of the truth in every place, where it is received, disperse itself.

5. So also Tertullian de Præscript. c. 20. Presently, therefore, the Apostles having first in Judea testified the Faith and instituted Churches, and then taken them over all the world, made known to the nations the same doctrine of the same Faith, and so planted Churches in every city, from which the rest of the Churches afterward borrowed their seeds of Faith and doctrine, and so daily continue to do and are formed into Churches.

6. From which premises his conclusion is just that which I here deduce; if so, then it is evident that every doctrine must be deemed true which conspires with the Apostolical Churches; which are the wombs and originals whence the Faith came out, as maintaining that without any question, which the Churches received from the Apostles, the Apostles from CHRIST, and

CHRIST from GOD; and that all other doctrine is under the prejudice of being false, which is contrary to the truth of the Churches of the Apostles, of CHRIST, and of GOD.

7. It is true, indeed, that whatsoever one Church professeth to have received from the Apostle that planted it, is of itself sufficient, without the confirmation of all others, to beget and establish belief in him, to whom it thus testifies: whereupon Tertullian refers the inquirer to that Apostolic Church which is next to him, be it Corinth, if he live in Achaia, Philippi, or Thessalonica, if in Macedonia, Ephesus, if in Asia, or if he be near Italy, Rome. But this is no farther to be extended, than while we suppose without inquiry, that other Apostolical Churches have received, and are ready to testify the same; which presumption or supposal must then cease, when upon inquiry we find the contrary; there being then none of this first kind of universality; viz. of place, and so far, no validity in the testification.

8. Secondly, for the universality of time, that must be cautiously understood; not so as to signify it a prejudice to any doctrine, if in some one or more ages it have not been universally received; for then there could be no Heretics at any time in the world: but so as to extend to the first and purest, and not only to the latter ages of the Church.

9. That which was delivered by the Apostles was certainly received in that first age, wherein they lived; and by careful inquiry will be found from their monuments to have been among them. And that which by this trial is discerned to be of latter date, not to be described in the first times, nor testified by sufficient authority to be derived from thence, falls short again of this second part of universality in respect of time.

10. Thirdly, for the consent of testifiers, that is also necessary to the rendering it a Catholic and authentic testimony; any considerable number of dissenters being of necessity to weaken our belief, and infuse reasons of doubting, and a preponderancy of dissenters the other way, to weigh down (at least to incline) the belief to the contrary.

§ VI. 1. This, therefore, being thus established, and the

conjunction of all the three sorts of universality being in all reason required to the authentic testifying of tradition, it is soon defined, where these qualifications are to be looked for, and where they may be found.

2. Questionless not in any one Bishop, or succession of Bishops in any See for many latter ages, not including the Apostles; for whatever his pretensions may be to authority and supremacy over all other Churches, this can never convert a particular whether man or Church, into the universal, nor make his testimony authentic according to those rational and Christian rules, which we have learned from Lirinensis.

3. There are many Apostolic Churches beside that of Rome: great difference of Rome in these latter ages from the Primitive Apostolic Rome, to which the depositum was intrusted. And there are many dissenters to be found, who have always lived and flourished in the Catholic Church, which never acknowledged those doctrines to be delivered to them by the Apostles, which the Church of Rome hath of late assumed to be such. And for any privilege annexed to that Bishop's chair, or to that society of men, which live in external communion with him, that he or they can never define any thing to be (*de fide*) part of the Faith, which is not so, as that is, beyond all other their pretensions, most denied by us, and least attempted to be proved by the Romanist, and not so much as consented on among themselves; so must it in no reason be supposed in this dispute, or taken for granted by them, but is rejected with the same ease that it is mentioned by them.

4. As for other pretenders, I know not any, save only that of the universal consent of the Doctors of the first ages, or that of an universal Council. And both these we are willing to admit with such cautions only as the matter exacts, and the grounds of defining already laid.

5. The universal consent of the Doctors of the first ages, bearing testimony that such or such a doctrine was from the Apostles' preachings delivered to all Churches by them planted, or their general conform testimony herein, without any considerable dissenters producible, is, I acknowledge, authentic or

worthy of belief, and so hath been made use of by the orthodox of all times, as sufficient for the rejecting of any new doctrine.

6. So likewise is the declaration of a general Council, free, and gathered from all quarters, and in such other respects, truly so called, founded in the examination of the monuments of the several Apostolical plantations, either produced in Council, or authentically confirmed from the letters of the several Churches, either formerly prepared in provincial and national Councils, or otherwise sufficiently confirmed to them, and this declaration conciliarly promulgated, and after the promulgation universally received and accepted by the Church diffuse; or else it is evident all this while, that it is not a Catholic (truly so styled) testimony.

7. For that any Council of Bishops, the most numerous that ever was in the world (much less a but major part of those few, that be there present) is not yet really the universality of Christians, is too evident to be doubted of.

8. It can only then be pretended, that it is the universal representative, or such an assembly, wherein is contained the virtue and influences of the whole universal Church. And thus, indeed, I suppose it to be, as often as the doctrines there established by universal consent (founded in Scripture and tradition) have either been before discussed and resolved in each provincial Council, which have sent their delegates thither from all the parts of the world, or else have *post factum*, after the promulgation, been accepted by them, and acknowledged to agree with that Faith which they had originally received.—*Works*, vol. i. p. 545.

Id.—*Practical Catechism*.

But what if the particular Church wherein I was baptized, shall fall from its own steadfastness, and by authority or law set up that, which if it be not contrary to plain words of Scripture, is yet contrary to the doctrine or practice of the universal Church of the first and purest times; what will meekness require me to do in that case? Meekness will require me to be very wary in passing such judgment on that Church; but if the

light be so clear and the defection be so palpably discernible to all, that I cannot but see and acknowledge it, and in case it be true, that I am actually convinced, that the particular Church in which I live, is departed from the Catholic Apostolic Church; then it being certain that the greater authority must be preferred before the lesser, and that next the Scripture the Catholic Church of the first and purest times, (especially when the subsequent ages do also accord with that for many hundreds of years) is the greatest authority, it follows that meekness requires my obedience and submission to the Catholic Apostolic Church, and not to the particular wherein I live: so far I mean, as that I am to retain that Catholic Apostolic, and not this novel, corrupt, not Catholic doctrine. And if for my doing so I fall under persecution of the rulers of that particular Church, meekness then requires me patiently to endure it, but in no case to subscribe to or act anything which is contrary to this Catholic doctrine.—Some other obligations there are upon every Christian (wherein meekness interposeth not) which do require me not to depart from any Catholic Apostolic truth or practice, at least not to submit to (or act) the contrary, or to do anything which is apt to confirm others in so doing, or to lead those that doubt (by my example) to do what they doubt to be unlawful. For in all these particulars, the Christian law of scandal obliges me, not only not to yield to any schism from the Catholic Apostolic Church, or other the like corruption, but not to do those things by which I shall be thought by prudent men to do so.—Meekness permits me also to seek out for some purer Church, if that may conveniently be had for me. Nay, if I am by my calling fitted for it, and can prudently hope to plant (or contribute to the planting) such a pure Apostolic Church where there is none, or to reconcile and restore peace between divided members of the Church Catholic, my endeavour to do so is in this case extremely commendable, and that which God's providence seems to direct me to, by what is thus befallen me. . . . The authority by which it stands in the whole Church, is that of the practice of the primitive universal Christian Church; not that we have any certain evidence of the time of its beginning, but

that the immemorial observation of it is an argument of the primitive, if not Apostolic institution of it.—Lib. ii. § 1. & 12.

Ibid.

The practice and writings of the ancient Church, which is the best way to explicate any such difficulty in Scripture, is a clear testimony and proof, that both the bread and the wine belong to all the people, in the name of his Disciples at that time. But why may it not be said, that laymen may baptize also, and do those other things, for which CHRIST gave power to His Disciples, as well as this bread and wine, divided among the Disciples, should belong to them? The answer is given already, that the Apostolical practice and the universal consent of the ancient primitive Church have defined the one, and defined against the other, and that ought to satisfy any sober man's scruples; it being no way probable that CHRIST's institution would be presently frustrated and corrupted by His own Apostles, or their practice so falsified by the universal agreement of all that lived next after them, especially there being no universal Council, wherein it were possible for them all uniformly to agree on such an opposition.—Lib. vi. § 4.

THORNDIKE, PRESBYTER.—*Of the Principles of Christian Truth.*

Whatsoever then is said of the rule of Faith in the writings of the Fathers, is to be understood of the creed; whereof, though it be not maintained, that the words which pretenders were required to render by heart were the same, yet the substance of it, and the reasons and grounds which make every point necessary to be believed, were always the same in all Churches, and remain unchangeable. I would not have any hereupon to think, that the matter of this rule is not, in my conceit, contained in the Scriptures. For I find St. Cyril (Catech. v.) protesting, that it contains nothing but that which concerned our salvation the most, selected out of the Scriptures. And, therefore in other places, he tenders his scholars evidence out of the Scriptures, and wishes them not to believe that whereof there is no such evidence. And

to the same effect, (Eucherius in Symb. Hom. 1. Paschasius de Sp. S. in Præf., and after them Thomas Aquinas secunda ii. Quest. 1. Art. ix.) all agree that the form of the Creed was made up out of the Scriptures ; giving such reasons as no reasonable Christian can refuse. Not only because all they whose salvation is concerned have not leisure to study the Scriptures, but because they that have, cannot easily or safely discern, wherein the substance of faith, upon the profession whereof our salvation depends, consisteth ; supposing that they were able to discern between true and false, in the meaning of the Scriptures. To which I will add only that which Tertullian and others of the Fathers observe of the ancient Heretics, that their fashion was to take occasion, upon one or two texts, to overthrow and deny the main substance and scope of the whole Scriptures ; which, whether it be seen in the sects of our time, or not, I will not say here, (because I will not take any thing for granted which I have not yet principles to prove) but supposing it only a thing possible, I will think I give a sufficient reason why God should provide tradition as well as Scripture, to bound the sense of it ; as St. Cyril also cautioneth in the place aforementioned, where he so liberally acknowledgeth the Creed to be taken out of the Scripture. For (saith he) “the Faith was not framed as it pleased men, but the most substantial matters collected out of the Scripture do make up one doctrine of the Faith.” For, I beseech you, what had they, whosoever they were that first framed the Creed, but Tradition, whereby to distinguish that which is substantial from that which is not ? Hear Origen in the Preface to his books *περὶ ἀρχῶν*. “There being many that think their sense to be Christian, and yet the sense of some differs from their predecessors ; but that, which the Church preaches, as delivered by order of succession from the Apostles, being preserved and remaining the same in the Churches ; that only is to be believed for truth, which nothing differs from the Tradition of the Church. This, notwithstanding, we must know ; that the Holy Apostles, preaching the Faith of CHRIST, delivered some things, (as many as they held necessary) most manifestly to all believers, even those whom they found the duller in the search of Divine knowledge ; leaving the reason why they affirmed them

to the search of those that got to receive the eminent gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially of utterance, wisdom, and knowledge, by the Holy Ghost. Of other things they said that they are, but how, or whereupon they are, they said not. Forsooth, that the more studious of their successors, loving wisdom and knowledge, might have some exercise wherein to show the fruit of their wit; to wit, those that should prepare themselves to be worthy and capable of wisdom. Now, the particulars of that which is manifestly delivered by the preaching of the Apostles are these, which he proceedeth to set down. But Vincentius Lirinensis hath writ a Discourse on purpose to show that this rule of Faith, being delivered by succession to the principal, as St. Paul requires Timothy to do, and by them to those that were baptized, was the ground upon which all heresies, attempting upon the Faith, were condemned. So that, so many heresies, as historical truth will evidence, to have been excluded the Church from the Apostle's time, for matter of belief, so many convictions of this rule; which, because all agreed that they transgressed, therefore they were excluded the Church. But Vincentius, besides this, advanceth another mark to discern what belongs to the Rule, that is, what the ground and scope of our Creed requires. For it might be said, that perhaps something may come in question whether consistent with the rule of Faith or not, in which there hath passed no decree of the Primitive Church, because never questioned by that time: wherein, therefore, we shall be to seek, notwithstanding the decrees past by the Church upon ancient heresies. Which to meet with, Vincentius saith further, that whatsoever hath been unanimously taught in the Church by writing, that is, always, by all, everywhere, to that, no contradiction is ever to be admitted in the Church. Here the style changes; for whereas Irenæus, Tertullian, and others of former time, appeal only to that which was visible in the practice of all Churches; by the time of the Council at Ephesus, (the date of Vincentius's book) so much had been written upon all points of Faith, and upon the Scriptures, that he presumeth; evidence may be made of it all, what may stand with that which the whole Church had taught, what may not. p. 44.

Id.—*Just weights and measures.*

It is not the decree of the present Church, but the witness and agreement of the whole Church, that renders any thing infallible.— Seeing, therefore, that the malice of man, by dividing the Church, rendereth it invisible, as hard to be seen, though not invisible, as not possible to be seen, what remaineth, but that all public persons, and whosoever is interested in the divisions of the Church, understand and consider what account they owe, for the souls that must needs miscarry by the divisions which they maintain, when they need not? For how shall he be clear, that professes not a desire of condescending to all that which truth will allow on either side, for the advantage of peace on both sides? And seeing neither side can make peace without the consent of both, but either may have truth alone; what remaineth, but that all reformation be confined within those bounds, which the faith and the law of the Catholic Church fixeth?—The true sense of the Scripture is not to be had, but out of the records of antiquity; especially of God's ancient people first, and then of the Christian Church. The obligation of that sense upon the Church at this time, is not to be measured against the Primitive practice of the whole Church. The reformation of the Church is nothing but the restoring of that which may appear to have been in force.—It is, therefore, necessary, that both sides professing the Reformation, should agree upon the true ground of Reformation; and so upon the rule which that ground will maintain and evidence; that is, to submit all that is in question to the visible practice of the primitive times, before those abuses were brought in, which the reformation pretendeth to restore.—There is the same ground to believe—that there is, for the common Christianity, namely, the Scriptures interpreted by the perpetual practice of God's Church.—And seeing the abating of the first form under Edward VI. hath wrought no effect, but to give them that desired it an appetite to root up the whole; what thanks can we render to God for escaping so great a danger, but by sticking firm to a rule that will stick firm to us, and carry us

through any dispute in religion, and land us in the haven of a quiet conscience, what troubles soever we may pass through, in maintaining that the Reformation of the Church will never be according to the rule which it ought to follow, till it cleave to the Catholic Church of CHRIST in this particular? p. 50, 51. 98. 159.

Ibid.—*The due way of composing the Differences on foot, preserving the Church.*

The chief ground that I suppose here, because I have proved it at large, is the meaning of that Article of our Creed, which professeth one Catholic Church. For either it signifies nothing, or it signifies that God hath founded one visible Church, that is, that he hath obliged all churches (and all Christians of whom all churches consist) to hold visible communion with the whole Church in the visible offices of God's public service. And therefore I am satisfied, that the differences upon which we are divided, cannot be justly settled upon any terms, which any part of the whole Church shall have just cause to refuse, as inconsistent with the unity of the whole Church. For in that case we must needs become schismatics, by settling ourselves upon such laws, under which any Church may refuse to communicate with us, because it is bound to communicate with the whole Church. p. 225.

TAYLOR, BISHOP.—*Dissuasive from Popery.*

It was the challenge of St. Austin to the Donatists, who (as the Church of Rome does at this day) enclosed the Catholic Church within their own circuits: "Ye say that CHRIST is heir of no lands, but where Donatus is co-heir. Read this to us out of the law and the Prophets, out of the Psalms, out of the Gospel itself, or out of the letters of the Apostles: read it thence, and we believe it:"—plainly directing us to the fountains of our faith, the Old and New Testament, the words of Christ, and the words of the Apostles. For nothing else can be the fountain of our faith: whatsoever came in after these, "*foris est,*" it belongs not unto Christ.

To these we also add, not as authors or finishers, but as helpers of our faith, and heirs of the doctrine apostolical, the sentiments

and catholic doctrine of the Church of God, in the ages next after the Apostles. Not that we think them or ourselves bound to every private opinion, even of a primitive bishop and martyr ; but that we all acknowledge that the whole church of God kept the faith entire, and transmitted faithfully to the after-ages the whole faith, *τύπον διδαχῆς* “ the form of doctrine, and sound words, which was at first delivered to the saints,” and was defective in nothing that belonged unto salvation ; and we believe that those ages sent millions of saints to the bosom of CHRIST, and sealed the true faith with their lives and with their deaths, and by both gave testimony unto JESUS, and had from him the testimony of his Spirit.

And this method of procedure we now choose, not only because to them that know well how to use it, to the sober and moderate, the peaceable and the wise, it is the best, the most certain, visible and tangible, most humble and satisfactory : but also because the Church of Rome does, with greatest noises, pretend her conformity to antiquity. Indeed the present Roman doctrines, which are in difference, were invisible and unheard of in the first and best antiquity, and with how ill success their quotations are out of the fathers of the three first ages, every inquiring man may easily discern. But the noises, therefore, which they make, are from the writings of the succeeding ages ; where secular interest did more prevail, and the writings of the fathers were vast and voluminous, full of controversy and ambiguous senses, fitted to their own times and questions, full of proper opinions, and such variety of sayings, that both sides, eternally and inconfutably, shall bring sayings for themselves respectively. Now although things being thus, it will be impossible for them to conclude from the sayings of a number of fathers, that their doctrine, which they would prove thence, was the catholic doctrine of the church ; because any number that is less than all, does not prove a catholic consent ; yet the clear sayings of one or two of these fathers, truly alleged by us to the contrary, will certainly prove that what many of them (suppose it) do affirm, and which but two or three as good Catholics as the other do deny, was not then matter of faith, or a doctrine of the church ; for if it had, these had been accounted heretics, and not have remained

in the communion of the church. But although for the reasonableness of the thing, we have thought fit to take notice of it; yet we shall have no need to make use of it, since, not only in the prime and purest antiquity, we are indubitably more than conquerors, but even in the succeeding ages, we have the advantage both 'numero, pondere, et mensura,' in number, weight, and measure.

We do easily acknowledge, that to dispute these questions from the sayings of the fathers, is not the readiest way to make an end of them; but, therefore, we do wholly rely upon Scriptures, as the foundation and final resort of all our persuasions, and from thence can never be confuted; but we also admit the fathers as admirable helps for the understanding of the Scriptures, and as good testimony of the doctrine delivered from their forefathers down to them, of what the church esteemed the way of salvation: and therefore, if we find any doctrine now taught, which was not placed in their way of salvation, we reject it as being no part of the Christian faith, and which ought not to be imposed upon consciences. They were 'wise unto salvation' and 'fully instructed to every good work;' and therefore, the faith, which they professed and derived from Scripture, we profess also; and in the same faith, we hope to be saved even as they. But for the new doctors, we understand them not, we know them not; our faith is the same from the beginning, and cannot become new.

But because we shall make it to appear, that they do greatly innovate in all their points of controversy with us, and show nothing but shadows instead of substances, and little images of things instead of solid arguments; we shall take from them their armour in which they trusted, and choose this sword of Goliath to combat their errors; for *non est alter talis*; it is not easy to find a better than the word of God, expounded by the prime and best antiquity.—Part i. book i. § i. *Works*, vol. x. p. 129.

HEYLIN, PRESBYTER.

Things that have been generally in the Church of Christ are generally conceived to have been derived from apostolical tradi-

tion, without any special mandate left in Scripture for the doing of them. Praying directly towards the East is conceived to be of that condition; why may we not conclude the like of setting up the altar along the wall? Many things come into our minds by a successional tradition, for which we cannot find an express command, which yet we ought to entertain, *ex vi Catholicæ consuetudinis*; of which traditions there are many, which still retain their force among us in England. This Church (the Lord be thanked for it) hath stood more firm for apostolical traditions, than any other whatsoever of the Reformation.—Antid. Lincoln, p. 87¹.

COMMISSIONERS OF A. D. 1662.—*Appointed to review the Book of Common Prayer.*

Ancient Liturgies in the Church, St. Chrysostom's, St. Basil's, St. James's, and others, and such things as are found in them all consistent with Catholic and Primitive doctrine, may well be presumed to have been from the first, especially since we find no original of these Liturgies from General Councils.—*Reply to Presbyterians*, § 16.

PEARSON, BISHOP AND DOCTOR.—*On the Creed.*

As our religion is Catholic, it holdeth fast that 'faith which was once delivered to the saints,' and since preserved in the Church; and therefore I expound such verities, in opposition to the heretics arising in all ages, especially against the Photinians, who of all the rest have most perverted the articles of our Creed, and found out followers in these latter ages, who have erected a new body of divinity in opposition to the Catholic theology. Against these I proceed upon such principles as they themselves allow, that is, upon the word of God delivered in the Old and New Testament, alleged according to the true sense, and applied by right reason; not urging the authority of the Church which they reject, but only giving in the margin the sense of the primi-

¹ As extracted in "the Canterburians' self-conviction," 1640. p. 63.

tive Fathers, for the satisfaction of such as have any respect left for antiquity, and are persuaded that Christ had a true Church on the earth before these times.—*Preface.*

BARROW, PRESBYTER AND DOCTOR.

It can indeed no wise be safe to follow any such leaders (whatever pretences to special illumination they hold forth, whatever specious guises of sanctity they bear) who in their doctrine or practice deflect from the great beaten roads of holy Scripture, primitive tradition, and Catholic practice, roving in by-paths suggested to them by their private fancies and humours, their passions and lusts, their interests and advantages: there have in all ages such counterfeit guides started up, having debauched some few heedless persons, having erected some *παρασυναγωγὰς* or petty combinations against the regularly settled corporations; but never with any durable success or countenance of Divine Providence; but like prodigious meteors, having caused a little *gazing*, and some disturbance, their sects have soon been dissipated, and have quite vanished away: the authors and abettors of them being either buried in oblivion, or recorded with ignominy; like that Theudas in the speech of Gamaliel, who “rose up boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men about four hundred joined themselves; who were slain, and all as many as obeyed him were scattered and brought to nought.”—*Works*, vol. iii. p. 206.

BULL, BISHOP AND DOCTOR.—*Apol. pro Harm.* i. 6.

God knows the secrets of my heart; so far am I from the itch of originality in Theological Doctrines, . . . that whatever are sanctioned by the consent of Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops, though my own small ability attain not to them, yet I will embrace them with all reverence. In truth I had already learned by no few experiments, in writing my *Harmony* while yet a young man, what now in my mature age I am most thoroughly persuaded of, that no one can contradict Catholic

consent, however he may seem to be countenanced for a while by some passages of Scripture wrongly understood and by the illusions of unreal arguments, without being found in the end to have contradicted both Scripture and sound reason. I daily deplore and sigh over the unbridled license of prophesying which obtained for some years in this our England, . . . under the tyranny of what some considered a wretched necessity. In a word, my hearty desire is this, Let the ancient customs, doctrines remain in force¹.

STILLINGFLEET, BISHOP.—*Grounds of Protestant Religion.*

The Church of England doth very piously declare her consent with the ancient Catholic Church, in not admitting any thing to be delivered as the sense of Scripture, which is contrary to the consent of the Catholic Church in the four first ages. Not as though the sense of the Catholic Church were pretended to be any infallible rule of interpreting Scripture in all things which concern the rule of faith; but that it is a sufficient prescription against anything which can be alleged out of Scripture, that if it appear contrary to the sense of the Catholic Church from the beginning, it ought not to be looked on as the true meaning of the Scripture. All this security is built upon this strong presumption, that nothing contrary to the necessary Articles of Faith should be held by the Catholic Church, whose very being depends upon the belief of those things which are necessary to salvation. As long therefore as the Church might appear to be truly Catholic by those correspondencies which were maintained between the several parts of it, that what was refused by one, was so by all; so long this unanimous and uncontradicted sense of the Catholic Church ought to have a great sway upon the minds of such who yet profess themselves members of the Catholic Church. From whence it follows, that such doctrines may well be judged destructive to the rule of faith, which were so unanimously condemned by the Catholic Church within that

¹ Concil. Nicæn. Can.

time. And thus much may suffice for the first enquiry, viz. What things are to be esteemed necessary, either in order to Salvation, or in order to Ecclesiastical Communion. p. 55.

KENN, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.

As for my religion, I die in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith, professed by the whole Church before the disunion of East and West; more particularly I die in the Communion of the Church of England, as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan Innovations, and as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross.—*His last Will.*

BEVERIDGE, BISHOP.—Preface to *Codex Canonum Eccles. Prim. vindicatus ac illustratus.*

To such a degree of temerity has this our senseless age advanced, that there is scarcely any thing in Christianity itself which is not either called into doubt in private, or made matter of controversy in public. So much so, that even those doctrines and rites which, during many ages back, and from the very beginnings of the Church, have every where been received, at last in these our days come into hazard, and are assailed, just as if we were the first Christians, and all our ancestors had assumed and borne the mere name of Christ, and nothing more; or at least, as if all had been constantly involved in the gravest errors, whoever before this time embraced the faith made known in the Gospel. Forsooth in these full late times, it seems new lights are boasted of, new and greater gifts of the Holy Spirit are pretended, and therefore new forms of believing, new forms of praying, new forms of preaching, new forms in the use of ecclesiastical administrations, are daily framed and commonly adopted. And, what is most absurd, nothing now is esteemed of before novelty itself, but the newer any thing is, so much the greater number and the more does it please, and the more anxiously is it defended. Hence these tears, hence so many horrible schisms in the Church!

For whilst individuals, indulging, beyond what is meet, their abilities, or rather their own wanton fancies, devote themselves to the introduction of novelties into religion, the whole body, through the infinite diversity of opinions, comes to be rent into contrary schools and factions.

But if we will only even now recollect ourselves, and weigh things with that temperate and fair spirit which is right, it will at once be clear that we, who now inhabit this and other countries around, are not either the first or the only worshippers of Christ, but only a small part of that great body whose head is Christ : inasmuch as that body, by the exceeding mercy of God, hath been spread abroad into all parts of the earth, and that, from the very times of the Apostles ; so that there is no age, and scarcely any country, in which there have not been very many who, by the faith which we profess, have attained unto heaven. According to this view, if we attentively survey this vast body of all Christians of every age, which is commonly called the *Catholic* or *Universal Church*, as constituted every where and always, we shall find in it certain, fixed, and, as it were, common principles, which run through the whole, and connect all its parts both with each other and with the head. The first of these, and that from which the rest arise, is, *that Holy Scripture, or the Old and New Testament, is divinely inspired*. In this all Christians every where agree, and have always agreed ; and therefore he who denies it, is pronounced unworthy of their fellowship and of their name. Still further, this holy Scripture, although in these precepts, which are absolutely necessary for every man's salvation, it be most clear and evident to all, yet, as to what respects doctrine and external discipline of the Church, it is not, from its very depth, received by all in one and the same sense, but "the divine sayings of this same Scripture are by one man interpreted in one way, and by another in another ; so that it would seem to admit almost as many meanings as there are men," as formerly *Vincent of Lirin*s observed, and as is more than sufficiently proved from the case of heretics and schismatics, inasmuch as, among them, every individual elicits his own erroneous opinions and practices out of the holy Scriptures interpreted after his own manner. In

things therefore of this nature, if we would be secured from error and falling, first of all, beyond all doubt, we must beware that we do not over pertinaciously adhere to the private opinions and conjectures of ourselves and others, but do rather carefully examine, what the ancient Church, or, at least, the great majority of Christians, have held in these matters, and must acquiesce in that decision which has obtained the consent of Christians in all ages. For as, according to Cicero, on every subject, "the consent of all men is the voice of nature," so also in things of this sort, the consent of all Christians may be deservedly accounted the voice of the Gospel. But there are many things which, although they are not read in express and definite terms in the holy Scriptures, are yet by the common consent of all Christians drawn out of these Scriptures. For example; "that there are in the ever-blessed Trinity three distinct Persons to be worshipped, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these are, each of them, truly God, and yet that there is but one God: that Christ is God and man, θεάνθρωπος, truly God and truly man, in one and the same person." These and such like, although they are not, either in the Old or New Testament, declared in so many words and syllables, yet have they, as founded on both, ever been agreed on by all Christians, certain few heretics only excepted, of whom no more account is to be had in religion, than of monsters in nature. So also, "that infants are to receive the ablution of holy Baptism, and that sponsors are to be used for that Sacrament. That the Lord's day, or the first day in every seven, is to be religiously observed as a festival. That our Lord's passion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, as also the coming of the Holy Ghost, are to be commemorated every year. That the Church is every where to be administered by Bishops, distinguished from Presbyters, and set over them." These and others of this sort are no where in the sacred Scriptures enjoined directly and by name, yet have they notwithstanding, during fourteen hundred years from the Apostles, been every where received into public use of the Church; nor can there be found any Church during that period not agreeing to these things. So that there have been, as it were, certain

common notions from the beginning implanted in the minds of all Christians, not so much from any particular passages of holy Scripture, as from all ; from the general scope and tenor of the whole Gospel ; from the very nature and purpose of the religion therein established ; and, finally, from the constant tradition of the Apostles, who, together with the faith, propagated ecclesiastical rites of this sort, and, if I may so speak, general interpretations of the Gospel. For on any other supposition it would be incredible, or even impossible, that they should have been received with so unanimous a consent every where, always, and by all.

3. From these premises, it is clear at the first glance what will follow. For seeing that no one doubts but that more confidence is to be placed in the whole body than in individual Christians, and more in the Universal Church than in any particular Churches whatsoever : seeing also that there are very many points in which the Universal Church, during many ages after the Apostles, agreed : seeing, finally, that this consent of the Universal Church is the surest interpretation of holy Scripture on those points on which it may be had : it hence most clearly follows, of what and how great use the ancient Fathers, and other writers of all ages of the Church, must be, and how necessary to be consulted by them, who, in the prosecution of ecclesiastical controversies, have at heart either their own salvation, or the peace of the Church. For, were there no commentaries of the ancient Church, no acts of councils, no monuments of ecclesiastical history, extant at this day, in how great darkness should we be involved respecting our very religion itself? How easy would it be for any subtle heretic, or even for any the most flagitious impostor, under the mask of piety, to deceive the generality, and to lead them into the most pernicious errors of every description? Who could then convict the Church of Rome, or any other even the most corrupt communion, of fault or error, in those particulars which are not expressly prohibited in holy Scripture? For whence could it be proved, whether those things which are in use in that Church had, or had not, been handed down from the very Apostles, and approved by the consent of

the Universal Church? Finally, how many and how great disadvantages of every kind would arise hence? But there is no reason that we should occupy our time in the enumeration of these things, seeing that amidst so many and so great confusions of empires, convulsions of particular Churches, and perturbation of all human affairs, it hath been so ordered by the most wise and merciful providence of Almighty God, that from the very times of the Apostles even unto these our own times, there is no age whose ecclesiastical memorials are not preserved to us. From which memorials accordingly we are enabled to conceive a perfect idea of the Universal Church, and to feel assured and certain, what has through all ages been admitted and what rejected; what rites and doctrines have prevailed, what heresies and schisms have been disapproved and condemned. Finally, from these and these alone we may see, on what points of doctrine and discipline agreement hath ever prevailed among all Churches, and on what again controversy hath existed between them, and consequently what is more, and what less, necessary to be believed and observed. For whatever is to be said of other things, those things at any rate in which all Churches every where have agreed, cannot but be most certain, and necessary, even at this very time, to be retained of all.

4. This consent however, be it remembered, of which we are speaking, of the Universal Church, on any articles of Faith or ecclesiastical rites, is not to be sought from one or two writers, much less from any one or two passages in any particular writer, apart from the rest, but from all combined, or at least from the greatest part of those, who, in all ages of the Church, (and especially the earlier) were the authors of any written works, in which they treated on these subjects. For in all societies, such as is the Church, the majority takes place of the minority, and has the same right as the whole. The words of the civil law are, "What is done by the majority of the court, is accounted the same as if done by all." Nay, this is one of the ordinary rules of that law. "That is ascribed to the whole, which is publicly done by the majority." That therefore which is by the majority either appointed or affirmed, that is rightly to be con-

sidered the act of the Universal Church ; much more that which is confirmed by the united testimonies of all, or nearly all. To which class very many things in ecclesiastical matters may easily be reduced. For although we have not the express opinions of every individual Christian, through all ages, handed down to us, yet we possess what is to the same effect. For, first, when we speak of the consent of the Universal Church, it is not necessary that we regard the opinions of the people also, or laity. For they have never been admitted to deliver their judgment on the doctrine or discipline of the Church, in that it was presumed that in all things they, as is right, followed, not led, the opinions of their pastors. And besides, seeing that the people were anciently wont to vote in the election of their own bishops, and to give their testimony concerning those to be elected ; by that very act they shewed openly enough that they agreed to their doctrine and discipline ; so that whatever might be the opinion of any one bishop, the people over whom he presided might fairly be held to be guided by the same. In consequence, that this consent of the Church is to be sought not from the people, but from their bishops, from the teachers and priests, *Vincent of Lirins* formerly rightly observed : “ Consent also in like manner we shall arrive at,” says he “ if in this very antiquity we follow the definitions and expressed opinions of all, or, at any rate, of nearly all, the priests and teachers.” And indeed this position, namely, “ that the consent of the Universal Church is to be sought not from the people, but from the bishops and clergy,” is one of those very many points in which we have the Universal Church itself agreeing ; seeing that when about to discuss ecclesiastical matters, she hath rarely suffered the people to be present, never to deliver an opinion, or to vote. For neither, in all the councils which have ever been held on matters of that sort, do we read, that any one from among the people set his name to the decrees. But in each age the common affairs of the Church were transacted by bishops alone in council assembled, with, occasionally, certain presbyters, holding the places of their respective bishops. Which councils, if held in any one province, represented that *provincial* Church alone ; but if attended by all conjointly, or by

the majority of them, they then represented the *Universal Church*. "By which" (councils), as Tertullian says, "both such points as are of a deeper character are discussed in common, and the very assembly, as representing the whole Christian name, is held in great reverence." But councils of this sort, as well *provincial*, held by particular provinces, as *Universal*, held (as the origin of their name declares) by the Universal Church, such councils are even now extant, with many of their acts and decrees. There are extant also very many commentaries of individual bishops and presbyters, not indeed of all, but yet of those who, in each age, were most learned, and best acquainted with the doctrines and rites of the Church. From all of which, we are able most clearly to see (if any other thing) the common opinions both of all, and each of, the Churches, and so to collect most assuredly what we are to hold on these points. For although we grant it to be doubtful whether others, who either were not authors, or whose writings are not now in existence, may not perchance have held otherwise, yet since that is not capable of proof, and not to be capable of proof, in causes of this sort, is manifestly the same as not to exist; whatever all, or the majority of those, whose genuine works have been left us, taught, as it were in common, that is without any doubt, to be held for the common and constant doctrine of the Universal Church. Especially when the Universal Church also has itself fully enough testified her agreement to that doctrine, which is preserved in the ancient writings of Councils and Fathers, from this fact, that, the providence of God so ordering, she hath preserved to us those writings in which that doctrine is contained, the commentaries, in the mean time, of others, who held otherwise, having been buried in so deep oblivion, that scarcely have their names been transmitted to posterity. From all which things, as briefly and summarily premised, we may rightly conclude, that all, both separate works of individual fathers, and acts and monuments of Synods, as well provincial as universal, which exist at this day, are, in the first place, of this very great and remarkable use to us, in that from them we may consider as certainly proved, what the Universal Church hath ever believed and openly taught, on necessary

articles of Faith and rites ecclesiastical, and therefore what is to be ever believed and taught in the Church. For no one can doubt, but that it is both most safe, and supremely necessary, in all things, as far as is possible, religiously to walk in the steps of the faith and customs of the Universal Church.

5. But perhaps some one may say, "that the Fathers, both separately as individuals, and many of them conjointly, erred in various points of religion; and that they at times disagree among themselves, and that indeed, sometimes, on matters of great moment." These objections, I confess, against the ancient Fathers of the Church, and their authority in the settlement of ecclesiastical controversies, have been of late introduced. But whether they be true or false, is a point which we need not now discuss. For, even if we grant them true to the fullest extent, yet can no argument be drawn from them against our judgment concerning the *right use of the Fathers*. Inasmuch as we are speaking of the Fathers, not as individuals taken separately, but as taken all conjointly. And therefore how many errors soever may have been detected in one or more, and how much soever in some things, possibly, of great moment, they may even disagree with one another, or at least may appear to disagree, yet our position remains firm enough and stable, since there are certainly, after allowance made for them, many things, on which an agreement prevails among all the Fathers universally, and very many, to which a majority of them have given their united assent. But all the dissensions which have been raised among them on certain subjects, take nothing from their supreme authority on those points in which they agree, but rather in an eminent degree confirm it. For the fact, that in other things they have differed, most plainly manifests, that those things, on which they have agreed, they have handed down, not from any compact or agreement, not from any party formed, not from any communication of design, nor finally, from their own private opinions, but naked and unadulterated, as derived from the common and general interpretation and tradition of the Universal Church. And, indeed, although on certain less necessary points, as well of faith as of discipline, the ancient Fathers do in some little degree differ

one from another, yet that very many things have been received with the fullest agreement by all, is so clear, that we may judge of it with our own eyes. For there are many things which we see have been defined by the Universal Church in councils truly ecumenical, many things which have been approved by the consent of several, many things again by the consent of all the writers of the Church; many things, finally, concerning which there was in ancient times no controversy moved, some of this class have been mentioned by us above, to which very many others may be added. Those especially which, although not definitively prescribed in holy Scripture, have yet been retained by our very pious and prudent reformers of the English Church.

6. For when this our English Church, through long communion with the Roman Church, had contracted like stains with her, from which it was necessary that it should be cleansed, they who took that excellent and very necessary work in hand, fearing that they, like others, might rush from one extreme to the other, removed indeed those things, as well doctrines as ceremonies, which the Roman Church had newly and insensibly superinduced, and, as was fit, abrogated them utterly. Yet notwithstanding, whatsoever things had been, at all times, believed and observed, by all Churches, in all places, those things they most religiously took care not so to abolish with them. For they well knew, that all particular Churches are to be formed on the model of the Universal Church, if indeed, according to that general and received rule in ethics, "every part which agreeth not with its whole is therein base." Hence therefore these first reformers of this particular Church directed the whole line of that reformation, which they undertook, according to the rule of the whole or universal Church, casting away those things only which had been either unheard of, or rejected by, the Universal Church, but most religiously retaining those which they saw, on the other side, corroborated by the consent of the Universal Church. Whence it hath been brought to pass, that although we have not communion with the Roman, nor with certain other particular Churches, as at this day constituted, yet have we abiding communion with the

Universal and Catholic Church, of which evidently ours, as by the aid of God first constituted, and by his pity still preserved, is the perfect image and representation.

7. But, that we digress no further from our proposed object, when we are speaking of the *Universal Church*, and its agreement, without any doubt, regard is to be had especially to the *Primitive Church*: inasmuch as, although it be only a part of the whole, yet is it universally agreed that it was the more pure and genuine part. For the same hath happened to the Church, which hath happened to each several commonwealth, namely, that, ancient customs passing by degrees into disuse, new institutions are devised by the wanton imaginations of men's minds, which very fault is above all other to be eschewed in religion. For it is agreed among all Christians, that the Apostolic Church as constituted by the Apostles of our Lord in person, under the guidance of Divine inspiration, and by them whilst yet living administered, was of all Churches the purest and most perfect. Furthermore nothing seems more at variance with the common faith of Christians than that the doctrine or discipline instituted by the Apostles, should have been corrupted or any way changed by their immediate successors. For all confess, that the Apostles were most faithful men, and of consequence willed to ordain none as their successors, except those whose faith and integrity was fully approved by themselves personally. Therefore the first successors of the Apostles doubtless kept inviolate and uncorrupted the Church, whose government had been entrusted to them; and in like manner handed it down to their own successors, and these again to others, and so on; insomuch that there can exist no doubt, but that at least during two or three ages from the Apostles, the Church flourished in her primitive vigour, and, so to say, in her virgin estate, that is, in the same condition in which she had been left by the Apostles themselves; except that from time to time new heresies burst forth even in those days, by which the Church was indeed harassed, but in no way corrupted; clearly no more than the Church, strictly Apostolic, was perverted by those errors, which arose whilst the Apos-

ties were yet living. For they had scarcely time to rise up, before they were rejected by the Catholic Church. Which things therefore notwithstanding, the Universal Church which followed ever held that *Primitive* Church to be most pure, and, in refuting all heresies which afterwards arose, appealed to her as the rule of other Churches. For if any one endeavoured to bring any thing new into the doctrine or discipline of the Church, those Fathers who opposed themselves to him, whether individually or assembled together in a body, sought their arguments, as out of the holy Scriptures, so also out of the doctrines and traditions of the Church of the first ages. For this is observable in nearly all acts of councils, and commentaries of individual Fathers, wherever, that is, ecclesiastical controversies are discussed. And indeed nothing still is more rational, nothing certainly more desirable, than that all particular Churches at this day wherever constituted, were reformed after the model of the *Primitive* Church. For this measure would immediately cast forth whatever corruptions have crept in during later ages, and would restore to their ancient original, on the other hand, all things which are required for the true constitution of a Christian Church.

PATRICK, BISHOP.—*On Tradition.*

And farther we likewise acknowledge, that the sum and substance of the Christian Religion, contained in the Scriptures, hath been delivered down to us, even from the Apostles' days, in other ways or forms, besides the Scriptures. For instance, in the Baptismal Vow, in the Creed, in the Prayers and Hymns of the Church, which we may call Traditions, if we please; but they bring down to us no new Doctrine, but only deliver, in an abridgement, the same Christianity which we find in the Scriptures.

Upon this there is no need that I should enlarge; but I proceed farther to affirm,

That we reverently receive also the unanimous Tradition or Doctrine of the Church in all ages, which determines the meaning of the holy Scripture, and makes it more clear and unques-

tionable in any point of Faith, wherein we can find it hath declared its sense. For we look upon this Tradition as nothing else but the Scripture unfolded ; not a new thing, which is not in the Scripture ; but the Scripture explained and made more evident.

And thus some part of the Nicene Creed may be called a Tradition ; as it hath expressly delivered unto us the sense of the Church of God, concerning that great Article of our Faith, that **JESUS CHRIST** is the **SON OF GOD**, which they teach us was always thus understood : the **SON OF GOD**, “ begotten of his Father before all worlds, and of the same substance with the Father.”

But this Tradition supposes the Scripture for its ground, and delivers nothing but what the Fathers, assembled at Nice, believed to be contained there, and was first fetched from thence. For we find in Theodoret (L. i. 66.) that the famous Emperor Constantine, admonished those Fathers, in all their questions and debates, to consult only with these heavenly inspired writings ; “ because the Evangelical and Apostolical Books, and the oracles of the old Prophets, do evidently instruct us what to think in Divine matters.” This is so clear a testimony, that in those days they made this complete rule of their faith, whereby they ended controversies, (which was the reason that in several other Synods we find they were wont to lay the Bible before them,) and that there is nothing in the Nicene Creed, but what is to be found in the Bible ; that Cardinal Bellarmine hath nothing to reply to it, but this : “ Constantine was indeed a great Emperor, but no great Doctor.” Which is rather a scoff, than an answer ; and casts a scorn not only upon him but upon that great council, who, as the same Theodoret witnesseth, assented unto that speech of Constantine. So it there follows in these words : “ The most of the Synod were obedient to what he had discoursed, and embraced both mutual concord and sound doctrine.”

And accordingly St. Hilary a little after extols his son Constantius for this, that he adhered to the Scriptures ; and blames him only for not attending to the true Catholic sense of them. His words are these, (in his little Book which he delivered to Constantine) “ I truly admire thee, O Lord Constantius the Em-

peror, who desirest a Faith according to what is written." They pretended to no other in those days; but (as he speaks a little after) looked upon him that refused this, as Antichrist. It was only required that they should receive their Faith out of God's Books, not merely according to the words of them, but according to their true meaning, (because many "spake Scripture without Scripture, and pretended to Faith without Faith," as his words are); and herein Catholic and constant Tradition was to guide them. For whatsoever was contrary to what the whole Church had received and held from the beginning, could not in reason be thought to be the meaning of that Scripture which was alleged to prove it. And, on the other side, the Church pretended to no more than to be a witness of the received sense of the Scriptures; which were the bottom upon which they built this Faith.

Thus I observe Hegesippus saith, (in Euseb. his History, L. iv. c. 22.) that when he was at Rome, he met with a great many Bishops, and that "he received the very same Doctrine from them all." And then, a little after, tells us what that was, and whence they derived it, saying, "That in every succession of Bishops, and in every City, so they held; as the Law preached, and as the Prophets, and as the Lord." That is according to the Doctrine of the Old and New Testament.

I shall conclude this particular with a pregnant passage which I remember in a famous Divine of our Church, (Dr. Jackson, in his Treatise of the Catholic Church, chap. 22,) who writes to this effect:—

That Tradition which was of so much use in the Primitive Church, was not unwritten Traditions or Customs, commended or ratified by the supposed infallibility of any visible Church, but did especially consist in the confessions or registers of particular Churches. And the unanimous consent of so many several Churches, as exhibited their confessions to the Nicene Council, out of such forms as had been framed and taught before this controversy arose, about the Divinity of Christ; and that voluntarily and freely (these Churches being not dependent one upon another, nor overpowered by any authority over them, nor misled by faction to frame their confessions of Faith by imitation, or ac-

ording to some pattern set them), was a pregnant argument, that this faith wherein they all agreed, had been delivered to them by the Apostles and their followers, and was the true meaning of the holy writings in this great Article; and evidently proved, that Arius did obtrude such interpretations of Scripture, as had not been heard of before; or were but the sense of some private persons in the Church, and not of the generality of believers.

In short the unanimous consent of so many distinct visible Churches, as exhibited their several Confessions, Catechisms, or Testimonies of their own or forefathers' Faith, unto the Council of Nice, was an argument of the same force and efficacy against Arius and his partakers, as the general consent and practice of all nations, in worshipping a Divine Power in all ages, is against Atheists. Nothing but the ingrafted notion of a Deity, could have induced so many several nations, so much different in natural disposition, in civil discipline and education, to affect or practise the duty of Adoration. And nothing but the evidence of "the ingrafted word" (as St. James calls the Gospel) delivered by CHRIST and his Apostles in the holy Scriptures, could have kept so many several Churches as communicated their confessions unto that Council, in the unity of the same Faith.

The like may be said of the rest of the four first General Councils; whose decrees are a great confirmation of our belief, because they deliver to us the consent of the Churches of Christ, in those great truths which they assert out of the holy Scriptures.

And could there any Traditive Interpretation of the whole Scripture be produced upon the authority of such original Tradition, as that now named, we would most thankfully and joyfully receive it. But there never was any such pretended; no, not by the Roman Church, whose Doctors differ among themselves about the meaning of hundreds of places in the Bible. Which they would not do sure, nor spend their time unprofitably in making the best conjectures they are able, if they knew of any exposition of those places in which all Christian Doctors had agreed from the beginning.

But more than this, we allow that Tradition gives us a consi-

derable assistance in such points as are not in so many letters and syllables contained in the Scriptures, but may be gathered from thence, by good and manifest reasoning. Or, in plainer words perhaps, whatsoever Tradition justifies any Doctrine that may be proved by the Scriptures, though not found in express terms there, we acknowledge to be of great use, and readily receive and follow it, as serving very much to establish us more firmly in that truth, when we see all Christians have adhered to it.

This may be called a confirming Tradition: of which we have an instance in the Doctrine of Infant Baptism, which some ancient Fathers call an Apostolical Tradition. Not that it cannot be proved by any place of Scripture; no such matter: for though we do not find it written in so many words that Infants are to be baptized, or that the Apostles baptised Infants: yet it may be proved out of the Scriptures; and the Fathers themselves, who call it an Apostolical Tradition, do allege testimonies of the Scriptures to make it good. And therefore we may be sure they comprehend the Scriptures within the name of Apostolical Tradition; and believed that this Doctrine was gathered out of the Scriptures, though not expressly treated of there.

In like manner we, in this Church, assert the authority of Bishops above Presbyters, by a Divine right; as appears by the Book of Consecration of Bishops, where the person to be ordained to this office, expresses his belief "that he is truly called to this Ministration according to the will of our LORD JESUS CHRIST." Now this we are persuaded may be plainly enough proved to any man that is ingenuous, and will fairly consider things, out of the holy Scriptures, without the help of Tradition: but we also take in the assistance of this for the conviction of gainsayers; and by the perpetual practice and Tradition of the Church from the beginning confirm our Scripture proofs so strongly, that he seems to us very obstinate, or extremely prejudiced, that yields not to them. And therefore to make our Doctrine in this point the more authentic, our Church hath put both these proofs together, in the preface to the form of giving orders, which begins in these words: "It is evident unto all men, diligently reading holy Scrip-

ture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been three Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

I hope no body among us is so weak, as to imagine, when he reads this, that by admitting Tradition to be of such use and force as I have mentioned, we yield too much to the Popish cause, which supports itself by this pretence. But if any one shall suggest this to any of our people, let them reply, that it is but the pretence, and only by the name of Tradition, that the Romish Church supports itself: For true Tradition is as great a proof against Popery, as it is for Episcopacy. The very foundation of the Pope's Empire (which is his succession in St. Peter's Supremacy) is utterly subverted by this; the constant Tradition of the Church being evidently against it. And therefore let us not lose this advantage we have against them, by ignorantly refusing to receive true and constant Tradition; which will be so far from leading us into their Church, that it will never suffer us to think of being of it, while it remains so opposite to that which is truly Apostolical.

I conclude this with the direction which our Church gives to Preachers in the Book of Canons, 1571, (in the Title *Concionatores*,) That "no man shall teach the people any thing to be held and believed by them religiously, but what is consentaneous to the Doctrine of the Old and New Testament; and what the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops have gathered out of that very doctrine." This is our Rule whereby we are to guide ourselves; which was set us on purpose to preserve our Preachers from broaching any idle, novel, or Popish Doctrines; as appears by the conclusion of that injunction: "vain and old wives' opinions, and Heresies, and Popish Errors, abhorring from the Doctrine and Faith of CHRIST, they shall not teach; nor any thing at all whereby the unskilful multitude may be inflamed either to the study of novelty, or to contention."

But though nothing may be taught as a piece of Religion, which hath not the fore-named original, yet I must add, that those things which have been universally believed, and not contrary to Scripture, though not written at all there, nor to be

proved from thence, we do receive as pious opinions. For instance, the perpetual Virginity of the Mother of God our SAVIOUR, which is so likely a thing, and so universally received, that I do not see why we should not look upon it as a genuine Apostolical Tradition.

I have but one thing more to add, which is, that we allow also the Traditions of the Church, about matters of Order, Rites, and Ceremonies. Only we do not take them to be parts of God's worship; and if they be not appointed in the holy Scriptures, we believe they may be altered by the same or the like authority with that which ordained them.—

As for what is delivered in matters of Doctrine, or Order, by any private Doctor in the Church, or by any particular Church, it appears by what hath been said, that it cannot be taken to be more than the private opinion of that man, or the particular decree of that Church, and can have no more authority than they have: that is, cannot oblige all Christians, unless it be contained in the holy Scripture.

Now such are the Traditions which the Roman Church would impose upon us, and impose upon us after a strange fashion.—

Our people may hereby be admonished not to suffer themselves to be deceived and abused by words and empty names, without their sense and meaning. Nothing is more common than this, especially in the business of Traditions, about which a stir is raised, and it is commonly given out, that we refuse all Traditions. Than which nothing is more false, for we refuse none truly so called; that is, Doctrine delivered by CHRIST, or His Apostles. No, we refuse nothing at all, because it is unwritten, but merely because we are not sure it is delivered by that authority to which we ought to submit.

Whatsoever is delivered to us by our LORD and His Apostles, we receive as the very word of God, which we think is sufficiently declared in the holy Scriptures. But if any can certainly prove, by any authority equal to that which brings the Scriptures to us, that there is any thing else delivered by them, we receive that also. The controversy will soon be at an end, for we are ready to embrace it when any such thing can be produced.

Nay, we have that reverence for those who succeeded the Apostles, that what they have unanimously delivered to us, as the sense of any doubtful place, we receive it, and seek no farther. There is no dispute whether or no we should entertain it.

To the Decrees of the Church also we submit in matters of Decency and Order ; yea, and acquiesce in its authority, when it determines doubtful opinions.

But we cannot receive that as a Doctrine of CHRIST, which we know is but the tradition of man, nor keep the ordinances of the ancient Church in matters of decency, so unalterably as never to vary from them, because they themselves did not intend them to be of everlasting obligation. As appears by the changes that have been made in several times and places ; even in some things which are mentioned in the holy Scriptures, being but customs suited to those ages and countries.

In short, Traditions we do receive, but not all that are called by that name. Those which have sufficient authority, but not those which are imposed upon us, by the sole authority of one particular Church, assuming a power over all the rest.—

It is a calumny to affirm, that the Church of England rejects all tradition, and I hope none of her true children are so ignorant, as when they hear that word, to imagine they must rise up and oppose it. No, the Scripture itself is a tradition ; and we admit all other traditions which are subordinate, and agreeable unto that ; together with all those things which can be proved to be Apostolical by the general testimony of the Church in all ages : nay, if any thing not contained in Scripture, which the Roman Church now pretends to be a part of God's word, were delivered to us by as universal uncontrolled tradition as the Scripture is, we should receive it as we do the Scripture.

But it appears plainly that such things were at first but private opinions, which now are become the doctrines of that particular Church, who would impose her decrees upon us under the venerable name of Apostolical universal tradition ; which I have shown you hath been an ancient cheat, and that we ought not to be so easy as to be deceived by it. But to be very wary,

and afraid of trusting the traditions of such a Church, as hath not only perverted some, abolished others, and pretended them where there hath been none; but been a very unfaithful preserver of them, and that in matters of great moment, where there were some; and lastly, warrants those which it pretends to have kept, by nothing but its own infallibility. For which there is no tradition, but much against it, even in the original tradition, the Holy Scriptures; which plainly suppose the Roman Church may not only err, but utterly fail and be cut off from the Body of CHRIST; as they that please may read, who will consult the eleventh chapter to the Romans, v. 20, 21, 22. Of which they are in the greater danger, because they proudly claim so high a prerogative as that now mentioned, directly contrary to the Apostolical admonition in that place: "be not high-minded, but fear."—pp. 11. 16. 32.

SHARPE, ARCHBISHOP.—*Sermons.*

We see from hence how groundlessly, how unreasonably, we Protestants are charged with Heresy by our adversaries. They make no scruple of calling us Heretics, and telling us we shall be damned upon that account, unless we come over to their Belief. Why, what is it they would have us believe? We believe all that JESUS CHRIST and His Apostles taught to the world, so far as we have knowledge of it. We believe all the holy Scriptures, and not only so, but we make them the rule of our Faith. We believe all those articles of Faith, into which all Christians in every country, from CHRIST'S time to this, have been baptized, and which by all the ancients have been accounted a perfect summary of the Christian Faith; nor do we hold any thing inconsistent with them. We own both CHRIST'S Sacraments; and we administer them entirely. We renounce all the Heresies that were condemned by the ancient general Councils; nay, we are ready to refer ourselves to those Councils, and to the primitive Fathers who lived at that time, for the trial of all the points which are disputed between us. And lastly, we are sure we are not obstinate in our errors, if they should prove so; we are sure

we have no secular ends to serve in the maintaining them ; and most of all sure we are, that we are not self-condemned, that our own conscience doth not accuse us for being of this way ; (which yet is one of those things that go to the making of an Heretic). Now if all these things can be truly said of us, (as I think they may be truly said of the Church of England, and of all the honest members of it) how is it possible that we can in any sense be guilty of Heresy ? In the sense of the Scriptures and of the Fathers I am sure we are orthodox Christians ; and in the sense of the greatest Divines, even in the Roman Communion, I am sure we are no Heretics. And if after all that, we must be branded with that name, all that we can say is, that “after the way which they call Heresy, so worship we the God of our Fathers.”—Vol. vi. p. 5.

Ibid.

We do not find, that in the controversies which arose in the ancient Church about matters of Faith, the guides of the Church ever made use of this argument of the Church's infallibility for the quieting and ending of them : which yet, had they known of any such thing, had been the properest and the easiest means they could have used. Nay further we know, that the ancient Fathers had another method of confuting Heretics and Schismatics than by appealing to the Church's infallibility : namely, by bringing their doctrines to be tried by the ancient usages and doctrines of the Apostolic Churches, and especially by the Divine oracles of Scripture, which they looked upon as the entire and only Rule of Faith.—Vol. vii. p. 61.

POTTER, ARCHBISHOP.—*Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford.*

To begin with Faith, the foundation of all other Christian duties. You cannot be ignorant, what attempts have lately been made, and are still daily further advancing, to destroy some of the principal doctrines, not of ours only, but of the Catholic Church in all ages ; and I wish I could not say, to weaken and

undermine all the rest: "these things have not been done in a corner."

Great industry hath been used, and that with too much success, to revive the Arian and Semi-arian Heresies; and with the professors thereof to unite almost all other sects of Christians, however they may differ from one another as to opinion, in the same visible Communion. So that instead of rejecting those, who deprave the Christian Faith, as St. Paul commands; or, in obedience to St. John, of refusing even to "receive them into our houses," or to "bid them God speed;" should this design prevail, we must pray with them, and partake with them of the LORD'S Table, and associate together in all other parts of religious worship; and those alone will be reputed Schismatics, who separate themselves from the Communion of Heretics.

Some have so far proceeded in this scheme of general comprehension, or rather confusion, as to assert, that all sorts of error, except those which immediately relate to practice, are innocent and unblameable. With these men one may, perhaps, deserve the name of an Heretic, who outwardly professeth something he inwardly disbelieves, and in that sense condemns himself: but in any other case, besides this of acting directly against the dictates of conscience, under which it is on all hands confessed to be a fault to defend the truth itself, they plainly intimate, that there is no harm in maintaining even the doctrine of Mahomet, or any other, though ever so opposite to the Christian Revelation. We must not, therefore, wonder to hear it affirmed, that in order to be justified before God, there is no need of anything more, than to act agreeably to our present inward persuasion, or in other terms, with sincerity; or, that equal degrees of this quality will in all cases (for I find no exception made) entitle men to equal degrees of Divine favour: whence it follows, that they who denied, or even crucified our SAVIOUR, provided they did it without remorse or hesitation, might deserve an equal reward with those, who are martyrs for Him.

We have been accustomed, and this agreeably to the judgment of all other Churches, and the most evident principles both of

Natural and Revealed Religion, to think it the duty of Christian princes to maintain God's true Religion and virtue; and the Church, our Mother, hath taught us in the Communion office to pray, that all in authority under them may do the same. Now, if by God's true Religion nothing be meant, but that moral virtue, from which it is plainly distinguished in this place, then our new masters may still perhaps allow the magistrate to execute this part of his office; but, if God's true Religion signifies that, which it always hath signified among Christians, the worship of One True God, as opposed to that of idols and false gods, or the way of worship prescribed in the Holy Scripture, in opposition to Heathenish, and other superstitions; or, if God's true Religion be understood to imply the belief of Three Persons in one Godhead, of the Incarnation, sufferings, and satisfaction of CHRIST, of the Resurrection of the Body, or of any other doctrine ever so plainly revealed by God; then it is openly declared, that for Christian magistrates to discourage false Religion, even in the least degree, or to favour and encourage that which is true, is to do something highly inconsistent both with the nature and ends of their own authority, and with the kingdom of CHRIST.

This may seem strange doctrine in a Christian country: but, since the Faith was for several ages maintained without the favour or protection of the civil magistrate, they, who advance these and the like novel opinions, may perhaps be thought more excusable, if they endeavour to recompense for the loss of these temporal advantages by their hearty concern and just zeal for that spiritual power, which our LORD hath left in His Church. But, instead of this, these men describe the Church, rather as a number of persons disunited from, and independent on one another, than as an orderly society under lawful governors of Divine, or necessary appointment; and thus root up, as far as in them lieth, the very foundation of all Ecclesiastical authority at once. It might easily be shown, how by the schemes lately published, every branch of this authority hath been very much weakened and impaired; or, rather, totally subverted and destroyed: but I shall confine myself to the subject, of which I have been

chiefly speaking, viz. the Christian Faith ; in things relating to which, it hath been thought, not only highly inconvenient, but absurd and impracticable for the Church to have any sort of authority whatsoever. Our own Church, indeed, in her twentieth article hath expressly declared, that the Church hath authority in controversies of Faith ; and therefore some of them, who do not approve this passage, have taken great pains to persuade the world, that it was not originally in the article, but inserted there by some, who affected more power, than of right belonged to them : but this attempt not succeeding according to their desires, the rest always speak of it with such reservations and evasions, as plainly show they heartily wish it were quite expunged. One of the chief causes of their complaint, is the obliging men to declare their assent to human decisions, as they are called ; that is, to articles of Faith, or doctrines, which however clearly deduced from the Holy Scriptures, are not found there in express words. For, when "unlearned and unstable" men, to use the words of St. Peter, "wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction," it was always customary, even from the most primitive ages, for the Church, in order to prevent the spreading of such infections, to require her members, especially such of them as had been distinguished by any public character, to make an open and solemn confession of their Faith ; not in the very words of Holy Scripture, which had been perverted and misunderstood, because that would have been ineffectual to the purpose intended ; but in others more fully, and distinctly setting forth the true sense and interpretation of those words. With this view it was, that the Fathers of Nice inserted into their Creed those clauses, which declare the true Divinity of our Blessed LORD, against Arius ; that not long after, in opposition to the Heresy of Macedonius, others were added by the general Council of Constantinople, to assert the Divinity of the Holy Spirit ; and that in the next century, though no further change was made in the Creed, other declarations of the true Faith, concerning the Incarnation of CHRIST, and the Personal Union of His two Natures, were composed by general Synods assembled at Ephesus and Chalcedon, when the two opposite Heresies of

Nestorius and Eutyches first showed themselves in the world. In these later times, indeed, this authority hath been very much abused; instead of articles of Faith, men have been compelled to declare their assent, not only to disputable opinions, but to such, as are evidently contrary, as well to the principles of natural reason, as to the Holy Scriptures, and the doctrine of the best ages; and those worthy men, whom God endued with power from on high, to withstand these unjust impositions, have been exposed to so many and great trials, as even the first Christians endured in the Heathen persecutions. These practices, together with the principles from which they proceed, can hardly be too much detested: but shall we then, instead of reforming these or the like abuses, quite discard that sacred authority which hath been abused? . . .

But I am in hopes, that in the opinion of every true son of this Church, it will be a sufficient confutation of all innovations, which have been, or hereafter shall be, advanced, to say with St. Paul, "we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God;" or, in the words of our Blessed Lord, "from the beginning it was not so." To become the author of new Hypotheses in Religion, or to call those doctrines into question, which have always been firmly believed in the Church, even from the most early ages to our times, savours more of the pride and arrogance of some vain-glorious philosopher, who by making strange discoveries, and contradicting the rest of the world, seeks to raise in others a great esteem of himself, than of the humility of a good Christian; whose chief glory consists in the entire resignation of his understanding, and the stedfast belief of all the truths, which God hath revealed to him, whether he doth, or doth not, clearly comprehend them. I speak not of improvements in the liberal arts and sciences; which had their rise from study and observation, and therefore must be advanced, and perfected in the same method: whereas the Christian Religion having been completely published to the world by our Blessed Lord, and His Apostles, no addition can be made to it without a new Revelation. Here, then, is no room for invention or discovery; but, on the contrary, if any doctrine be new, if it be not truly primitive and

Apostolical, we may, safely, without further examination, reject it as false and spurious, and no part of "the Faith once delivered to the Saints." Whence our best writers, as well in their controversies with the Papists, as with other Sectaries and Heretics, constantly appeal to the judgment and practice of the Church in the next centuries after the Apostles: which as she had better means of information, than can be pretended to in any succeeding age, so cannot reasonably be supposed, either through negligence or design, and this, in all parts of the world at once, to have depraved the Faith, whilst her Pastors, and other chief members, were daily suffering martyrdom in its defence: and few there are, or rather none at all, as far as I have been able to observe, who refuse to allow the testimony of the primitive writers its due weight and authority, such only excepted, as have not read them, or are afraid of their evidence, and, therefore, in order to divert us from the true sense of the Holy Scriptures, (in discovering which those interpreters have commonly the best success, who most carefully compare them with other books of the same or the next ages, as the best critics always do in explaining other authors) would strictly confine us to the mere words, because these alone, and unsupported, may more easily be forced to countenance their innovations.—*Works*, vol. i. pp. 283. 296.

Defence of the Charge.

There is not, therefore, the least ground to think, that the practice of the Church in this respect is contrary to Scripture. Let us now see, whether this writer hath succeeded better in another accusation he hath brought against it, viz. that it is Popish. I have allowed that this practice hath been abused to very ill ends by the Church of Rome; which, instead of explaining the true sense of Scripture, hath invented and imposed new Articles of Faith, contrary both to Scripture and reason. Which doth by no means satisfy this writer, who will, therefore, have the practice itself to be Popish; for unless he means this, he would, instead of contradicting me, say only the same thing I have done before. He pretends, that "by this engine it was that

step by step came on the claim of Infallibility." (p. 252.) Whereby if he understands that the authority of the Church was through the ambition of some men, and the negligence of others, so far by degrees increased and abused, that at length a claim of Infallibility was set up, he affirms nothing more than what I have allowed, that this authority hath been much abused; but then I must still put him in mind, that the abuse of authority in one age is no just ground for laying it aside in another. But if he would have it thought that the claim of Infallibility is a certain or necessary concomitant, or consequent, of this authority as exercised at the Council of Nice, or the other general councils mentioned by me, he must pardon me if this be not granted; for there is nothing more evident in History, than that no such authority was either then, or for many hundred years after claimed by any person in the world. Nay, so far was anything done in these councils from giving birth to the exorbitant power of the Pope, who claims this Infallibility, that the popish writers have never been able to prove, that in several of them he was allowed so much as to preside; and even in the last of them, that at Chalcedon, the See of Constantinople was, notwithstanding the warm and earnest opposition of the Pope's Legates, put upon the level with that of Rome, agreeably to what had been before decreed at Constantinople in the second General Council. These councils, therefore, are so many plain proofs against the Pope's authority, and are commonly insisted on as such by the Protestant writers. Neither doth it appear, that any authority was there exercised in relation to the interpretation of Scripture, which is not exercised or approved by the Church of England and other Protestant Churches: for in these there are Creeds, or Confessions of Faith; and such as reject any of the principal Articles of these Creeds, or Confessions, are commonly debarred both from Holy Orders, and also from Communion. This, therefore, having been the practice of Protestant Churches, and particularly of the Church of England, ever since the Reformation, which cannot be questioned, will, I hope, be excused from the imputation of serving the popish claim of Infallibility; unless it can be supposed, that the Protestant Churches, and this, from the very

beginning, have generally so far misunderstood, or acted inconsistently with their own principles, as to retain the very essence of popery. But to give some show or colour of popery to the practice of which I have been speaking, this writer hath filled his discourse with long and heavy complaints of the injustice of denying Christians the liberty of examining, and judging for themselves ; in which unfair proceeding of his, I desire leave once more to say, that I am no farther concerned than the body of Protestants ; who, as they invite men to read the Scriptures, and to see with their own eyes, so have never denied the Church authority to judge what persons are qualified for her Communion and for Holy Orders.

I must not forget under this head, that I am again charged not only with favouring Popery, but with being a Papist in disguise, with “acknowledging the Protestant principles for decency sake, but steadfastly adhering to the Popish” (p. 275), and all this, as it seems, for having referred you to the practice and writers of the Primitive times, and of the next ages after the Apostles ; whereby I am represented to understand the reign of Constantine, which happened, as he saith (pp. 270—274.), almost three hundred years after. Now I am not in the least apprehensive of my being suspected as a favourer of Popery by any man, who knows the true meaning of Popery ; but sure it is such a compliment to the Popish Religion, as no Protestant would have made, who understands his own principles, to date its rise from the time of Constantine ; the claim of Infallibility, and of the Papal Supremacy, as now exercised, the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, Invocation of Saints, Image Worship, Prayers in an unknown tongue, forbidding laymen to read the Scriptures, to say nothing of other peculiar tenets of the Church of Rome, having never been heard of during the reign of this great Emperor, or for a long time after ; as a very little insight into the Popish Controversies, or Ecclesiastical Historians, would have informed this writer. It would have been much more to his purpose, and equally consistent with truth and justice, to have told his readers that by the next ages after the Apostles, I meant the times immediately preceding the Reformation : but then one oppor-

tunity would have been lost of declaiming against the times wherein the Nicene Creed was composed, and Arianism condemned. As to the primitive writers I am not ashamed, or afraid to repeat, that the best method of interpreting Scripture seems to me to be the having recourse to the writers, who lived nearest the time wherein the Scriptures were first published, that is, to the next ages after the Apostles; and that a diligent inquiry into the Faith and practice of the Church in the same ages, would be the most effectual way, next after the study of the Scriptures themselves, to prevent innovations in doctrine; and, lastly, that this hath been practised with great success by some of our best advocates for the Protestant cause, as Bishop Jewel, for example, Archbishop Laud, Archbishop Ussher, Bishop Cosins, Bishop Stillingfleet, Dr. Barrow, Bishop Bull, with many others at home and abroad. To which it will be replied: That "our best writers, at least, in their controversies with the Papists, are so far from appealing to the judgment of the Church in the next centuries after the Apostles, in any such sense as the Bishop is arguing for against his adversaries; that the very best of them, Mr. Chillingworth, has declared upon the most mature consideration, how uncertain generally, how self-contradictory sometimes, how insufficient always he esteemed this judgment to be. He had seen Fathers against Fathers, Councils against Councils, the consent of one age against the consent of another; the same Fathers contradicting themselves, and the like, and he found no rest but in the Protestant Rule of Faith. He was willing to yield to every thing as truth, *Quod semper, ubique et ab omnibus*; because he well judged that nothing could be conceived to be embraced as truth at the very beginning, and so continue in all places, and at all times, but what was delivered at the beginning. But he saw, with respect to some controverted points, how early the difference of sentiment was." (p. 265. 266.) In answer to this, I shall not take upon me to determine what rank Mr. Chillingworth ought to bear among the Protestant writers; it being sufficient for my purpose, that many others, and those of chief note for learning and judgment, in their controversies with the Papists and others, have appealed, and this in the manner I have

recommended, to the Primitive writers, as every one may soon learn who will take the pains to look into their books. In the next place, it appears from this very passage of Mr. Chillingworth, as here represented, that this design was to prevent appealing to Fathers and Councils as a Rule of Faith; agreeably whereunto I have all along declared, that, in my opinion, the Scripture is the only Rule of Faith, and have no farther recommended the study of the Primitive writers, than as the best method of discovering the true sense of Scripture. In the third place, here is nothing expressly said by Mr. Chillingworth of the most Primitive writers or Councils, or of any who lived in the next ages after the Apostles; but he may very well be understood, notwithstanding any thing here produced, of those latter ages, wherein both Fathers and Councils degenerated from the Faith and doctrine of those who went before them; which is the more likely, because mention here follows of the Article which divided the Greeks from the Roman Communion; this having not been openly disputed before the seventh century. Fourthly, he is introduced as speaking in express terms of controverted points, but saying nothing of any principal point of Faith, nothing of any Article which was originally in the Nicene Creed. On the contrary it may be observed, in the last place, that he plainly speaks of doctrines received by the Church in all places and at all times, even from the very beginning, which, for that reason, he presumed not to reject. Now it cannot possibly be known what these are, without having recourse to the writers of the Primitive ages. So that, upon the whole, the method I have recommended is so far from being contradicted, that it is rather enforced by what this writer hath cited from Mr. Chillingworth. —p. 358.

GRABE, PRESBYTER AND CONFESSOR.—*Præfat. in Spicileg.*

It is the contempt of the Ecclesiastical Tradition, reaching down from the Apostolic age to our own, which causes Christians who are called to one Faith and to one hope, to split into various sects; each of which professes Scripture for its Rule of Faith, but bends our LORD'S declarations to its private likings and

wishes, and refuses communion to all who differ from it, depriving them of all privileges, bodily and spiritual. On one side upon Traditions truly Catholic and Apostolic, are superadded new opinions and superstitions which falsely pretend to the name; on the other that is torn away, overlooked, nay, sometimes rejected which has been believed and practised in the Church always, everywhere, and by all, and for this sole reason, because it is inconsistent with the new decrees and determinations, or altogether hostile to them.—Meanwhile, till public peace is restored to the world, we must see to our own private peace and safety, lest we be involved in the aforementioned evils, and perish in the ruin of others. We shall escape this mischief if we build ourselves up upon the faith once delivered to the Saints, and best unfolded in the writings of the ancient Fathers, not admitting aught which beyond or against it be latterly added, uncertain, false, vain, superstitious, idolatrous, nor agreeing with those who detract from the traditions of the Catholic Church, and contentiously revile the most ancient doctrine and discipline, nay, those who do not obey it with their whole heart.

Id.—De forma Consecrationis Eucharisticæ.

The form of consecration and opinion of the consecrated elements, in which both Catholics and Heretics, in the age immediately succeeding the holy Apostles, have agreed together, and which, ever since, has been kept in all ancient Churches, and is by some of the Fathers expressly reckoned amongst the unwritten apostolical traditions, and is moreover hinted at in the very writings of the New Testament, cometh undoubtedly from the Apostles, if not from our LORD himself, and ought, therefore, by no means to be changed, otherwise it will make the consecration doubtful, or at least unlawful for them that understand this matter. It is, therefore, an indispensable duty incumbent upon every Christian Church, and every priest in it, strictly to keep to the same matter and form, which our LORD JESUS CHRIST and his holy Apostles have used in the first institution and celebration of this sacred mystery, and to do in and with it what these have done, lest if they diminish or take aught off it, they

should lose either the substance or the benefit of this most holy Sacrament, and consequently, if through ignorance or mistake a fault or defect hath happened any where in these things, it is the bounden duty of the bishops and priests of that Church to rectify the same; the received customs and human laws notwithstanding; and of every one who, by reading the holy Scriptures and writings of the ancient Apostolical Fathers, is come to the knowledge of such fault or defect, to put them in mind of it, and to shew the same in order that it may be amended, since every one who knoweth the truth and doth not declare it, shall be judged by the LORD on the last day.—p. 75. 84.

BRETT, PRESBYTER AND CONFESSOR.—*On Tradition.*

Since then the will of GOD being once revealed, is to be known afterwards by tradition only, it behoves us to inquire how we may be satisfied that this tradition does not deceive us: for it is a general opinion here that tradition is very deceitful and not at all to be relied upon; and I do readily grant that mere oral tradition delivered from father to son, corroborated by no written evidence, is by no means to be relied upon for any long succession. And, therefore, we find that no nation or country, can give any tolerably satisfactory account of the state and condition of their ancestors, before they come to have the use of letters amongst them, by which their manners, laws, customs, and acts, might be transmitted to posterity. But this is no argument against such a tradition as is delivered or corroborated by written evidence, of such things, and in such manner, as we cannot think ourselves deceived by it. All our knowledge of laws, customs, and facts, which we are not ourselves eye-witnesses of, must be delivered to us by evidence, such as we have reason to believe, and we have no other way of coming to the knowledge of them. Now we could not be eye-witnesses of what happened before we were born, therefore, we must either say that we can come to the true knowledge of nothing which happened before we were born, which I think none but downright Sceptics will pretend to say, or else that we must believe

such tradition as deserves the name of a just and proper evidence; and I conceive that to be just and proper evidence, which we receive from those who could not be themselves deceived in what they relate, nor could have any design or purpose to deceive us in the relation, but on the contrary, must have exposed themselves to all their contemporaries, if they had given a wrong account of those matters. Therefore when an author of credit speaks of the customs or practice of the Church at a time when he lived, we have all the reason imaginable to believe him; for in that case it is certain he could not be deceived himself, neither could he write what was false in such a case without exposing himself to all that were living at that time. Thus for instance, if any one at this time should tell the world, that it is the custom or practice of the Church of England to carry the Host or consecrated Eucharistical Bread in a solemn procession, as they do in the Church of Rome, he must expose himself as a shameless liar, and could never be esteemed an author of any credit, because every man now living in England would know the thing to be false. Nay, if he should say that this was the practice in this realm an hundred and fifty years ago, or any time since the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, every Englishman would know it to be false, though there is no man now living that can remember what was done in her reign. And the like may be said with regard to any other public part of Divine worship. No man can impose upon the world so far, as to make them believe that any thing is a public practice, which he himself does not know, or see to be so. And though a man might possibly put upon a stranger, who may be supposed ignorant of the customs of the people, to whom he is a stranger; yet he that had the least value for his own reputation, would not dare to do this to a stranger living among the people of whose customs he pretends to give him an account, especially, if by that account he hopes to obtain a favour from that stranger, and may have just apprehensions of suffering through the displeasure of that stranger, if he should go about to deceive him. We may therefore be satisfied that St. Barnabas, for instance, would not have told the Jews that God had

appointed us to keep holy the eighth day, or first day of the week, in memory of CHRIST'S resurrection, and abolished the observation of the Sabbath day, if the Apostles had not taught this as the will of GOD: for he could not be deceived in this matter himself, being a companion of the Apostles, and well acquainted with the doctrine which they taught. Neither could he, if he would, put a deceit in this case upon any others, because all the Christians then living could have refuted him if he had uttered a falsehood in this particular. Therefore, though we do not place his Epistle among the inspired writings, yet we cannot question his evidence as to this matter. And the same may be said of Justin Martyr; if he had told the Emperors any falsehood with relation to the practice of the Christians, it was impossible but they must easily have discovered it, not a Christian then living but must have known it to be a falsehood, if it had been so; consequently he would not only have exposed himself as a shameless liar, but would likewise have made himself liable to the just displeasure of the Emperors, if he had not spoke the truth: nay, if any thing that he told the Emperors had been a new practice, and such as had not been the constant practice of the Christian Church from the beginning, he durst not have pleaded in behalf of such a practice as a Christian institution, for which so many Christians then living could have convicted him of falsehood, it being but forty years from the death of the Apostles when he wrote, and many of the Apostles' disciples who learned the Christian institutions immediately from them, being then alive. Justin then could not be deceived himself with regard to the Christian institutions, since he had opportunity of informing himself from the immediate disciples of the Apostles, and he durst not pretend to impose upon the Emperors, nor could have any interest either to write a false relation to them, or to put a cheat upon those that should come after. Therefore what we find to have been delivered as a custom of the Church, by St. Barnabas, or St. Justin, or any writers contemporary to them, that we firmly believe to have been of Apostolical institution. And we may say the same also of those that fol-

lowed them for one hundred and fifty years after the Apostles, such as Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, St. Cyprian, and their contemporaries, who could no more be put upon, and made to believe that any thing was an Apostolical institution, and publicly practised by the whole Church, than any man of sense and learning could now be put upon, and made to believe that such a thing (though really it was not so) was established here at the Reformation under Queen Elizabeth, and had continued to be the practice of the English Church ever since. And the same may be said if we add fifty or sixty years more to the account, which brings us down to the time of the Council of Nice. A Christian Synod could no more be deceived at that time in declaring the doctrine and practice taught and practised by the Apostles, than a bench of English Judges could be deceived in any law or custom which should be pretended to have been begun here in the reign of King Henry VII. And, therefore, where we have the declaration of that Council, or of any authors contemporary with it, or with any members of it, I conceive we may very reasonably depend upon their testimony for the truth of an Apostolical tradition. The testimony of the Church, therefore, is thus far at least to be esteemed a certain evidence of Divine or Apostolical institutions, and hitherto we may safely follow it without danger of being led into error by so doing; and that which may confirm us that hitherto the Church had not been deceived with regard to Apostolical institutions and practices is, her unanimity in those matters. Whatever was held as derived from Apostolic authority by one Church, was esteemed as such also by all other Churches, which could not have been if there had been a failure in the tradition; for error is various, and all Churches from East to West, from North to South, from one end of the world to another, could never have agreed in an erroneous tradition. Therefore where we find all Churches agreed in the same doctrines and forms of worship, and we are not able to trace the beginning of them, we may safely conclude that they are derived to us from the Apostles: for this is the rule laid down by St. Austin on this occasion: "what-

soever the universal Church holdeth, and which was not instituted by any Council, but has been always observed, that we most rightly conclude to have been a tradition derived from Apostolical authority." And in another place he says, "many things which are not to be found in their writings," (that is, in the writings of the Apostles) "nor in the Councils of later ages, yet because they are observed by the whole Church, are believed not to have been delivered or recommended by any authority but of them." Again, says he, "there are many things which the universal Church holds, and which for this reason are rightly believed to be commanded by the Apostles, although they are not found written." But it is to be observed, that it is only such traditions as have been held by the universal Church in all ages, and all places, such as we can trace up to the Apostolical age, and have the evidence of some of the Fathers, who living either in the Apostolical times, or so near to them, that they could not but distinguish between Apostolical traditions and later institutions, have given their testimony concerning. And therefore we justly reject the doctrine of purgatory, invocation of Saints, worship of relics and images, and other corrupt traditions of the Church of Rome, because we cannot find any evidence for their universality and antiquity. We can trace the original of all of them, and find them many years later than the times of the Apostles: but on the contrary we find the doctrines and customs of the ages nearest to the Apostles to be directly opposite to these modern traditions. It is not then every tradition that lays an obligation upon Christians, but only such traditions as we have good evidence to believe to have been derived from the Apostles, that is, the testimony of those who lived either in the Apostles' age, or so near to it, that they could not easily be imposed upon in this case, and made to believe that to be of Apostolical tradition which really was not so, that is to say, about the time of the Council of Nice, about two hundred years after the Apostolical age. And we may also believe the testimony of those who lived in the century following that Council, since in that time they could not be deceived in the tradition of what was acknowledged at the time of that Council to be Apostolical. But there

is no better rule for the judging concerning the authority of tradition, than that which is given by Vincentius Lirinensis in the beginning of his *Commonitory*.—§ ix. pp. 35—42.

Ibid.—*Introduction to the Independency of the Church.*

If any other matters not yet received or practised in our Church, should be found to be of equal Antiquity and Universality, I declare it to be my hearty desire that they also may be restored : for I am well assured, that from the beginning of the Gospel of Christ to the time of the Council of Nice, and long after during the fourth century, the Catholic Church all over the world was united in one holy doctrine, discipline, and manner of worship.—The practice of the Church therefore at the time of the Council of Nice is certainly best fitted to be the standard for every reformation of the Church.—Since then we have seen and experienced the folly of deviating so far from the Primitive plan to gain those who cannot be gained by any thing but the utter extirpation of Episcopacy and Liturgy, and all that is not according to their own novel fancies, why should we not entirely restore our Liturgy to the Primitive standard, and revive those usages,—by returning to which we shall plainly lead the van for the introduction of Catholic unity into the Church of Christ. For we shall then want nothing (as we now most certainly do) that is agreeable to the practice of the Primitive Church, when a Catholic uniformity was universally preserved.—The only means to remove this disunion, is by every Church returning to a closer union with the Primitive Church in doctrine, discipline, and worship : for as the church never was so strictly and firmly united as in the Primitive times, and particularly about the time when the Council of Nice was celebrated :—so if ever the Church be as firmly united again, it must be upon the same principles, and practices. The Church never was united but upon the principles and usages which obtained at the time of the Nicene Council : and we have therefore good reason to believe that it never can be united but upon those principles and usages. That Church then, which shall first restore all those principles and

usages, may be justly said to lead the way to Catholic Union.—
p. 7—10.

HICKS, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.—*Sermons*, No. 3.

But if any modern writer who is of yesterday, will otherwise interpret these words upon his own head, I will reply unto him what our late blessed Sovereign, the Martyr for the Apostolical Government, said unto Mr. Henderson in his second paper, “If the practice of the primitive Church (saith he) and the universal consent of the Fathers be not a convincing argument, when the interpretation of Scripture is doubtful, I know nothing.” And elsewhere; “Although I never esteemed any argument equal to the Scriptures, yet I do think the unanimous consent of the Fathers, and the universal practice of the primitive Church to be the best, and most authentical interpreters of God’s word; and consequently the fittest judges between me and you, till you find me a better.” According to what St. Augustin said of Infant Baptism, but may with much more reason be said of Episcopal Government, that which the Universal Church doth hold, and was never instituted by Councils, but hath always been retained in the Church, we most justly believe to have descended from no authority but the Apostles’.—Vol. iii. p. 82.

COLLIER, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.—*Vindication of the reasons
and defence.*

I desire to know, what authority any particular society of Christians of the sixteenth century had to desert from the custom of the Universal Church, from early and more enlightened ages, and which, as our author observes, were better *guides, as being much nearer the fountain’s head*, than those so long behind them. And if they had no good warrant for stepping out of the old paths, the fences of a modern constitution signify little.—That this was the practice of the Universal Church, St. Augustin is clear and decisive. And since nothing but *certain evidence* will satisfy our author, here he has it. Here is the attestation of all

Christendom. Here is number, weight, and authority, with a witness ; and is not the practice of the Universal Church a good ground for reliance ? What ? Not in those early and unblemished ages ? In those happy times when learning, and piety, and right belief had so visible an ascendant ?—It was a maxim with Luther and his adherents, to resign to nothing but a text of Scripture, of which themselves were to be the expositors. The Bible was God's, but the comment was their own ; as for Antiquity, they had no regard for it. Calvin likewise was much of the same mind. He gives no deference to Antiquity, and seems to confine the rule of worship to express declarations of Scripture. These men, though they discovered some errors, fell into others. Particularly Calvin and his followers held some principles very destructive of the public peace.—Knox rails upon the Emperor and our Queen Mary.—Part 2. pp. 72. 81. 164—166.

LESLIE, PRESBYTER AND CONFESSOR.—*Letter to a Gentleman converted from Deism.*

But there is an infallibility in the Church, not personal in any one or all of Christians put together ; for millions of fallibles can never make an infallible. But the infallibility consists in the nature of the evidence, which having all the four marks mentioned in the short method of the Deists, cannot possibly be false. As you and I believe there is such a town as Constantinople, that there was such a man as Henry VIII. as much as if we had seen them with our eyes : not from the credit of any historian or traveller, all of whom are fallible ; but from the nature of the evidence, wherein it is impossible for men to have conspired and carried it on without contradiction if it were false.

Thus, whatever doctrine has been taught in the Church, (according to the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis,) *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*, is the Christian doctrine ; for in this case, such doctrine is a fact, and having the foresaid marks must be a true fact, *viz.* that such doctrine was so taught and received.

This was the method taken in the Council called at Alexandria against Arius ; it was asked by Alexander, the Archbishop who

presided, *Quis unquam talia audivit?* who ever heard of this doctrine before? And it being answered by all the Bishops there assembled in the negative, it was concluded a novel doctrine, and contrary to what had been universally received in the Christian Church. Thus every doctrine may be reduced to fact; for it is purely fact, whether such doctrine was received or not?

And a council assembled upon such an occasion stands as evidence of the fact, not as judges of the faith: which they cannot alter by their votes or authority.

A council has authority in matters of discipline in the Church; but in matters of faith, what is called their authority, is their attestation to the truth of fact; which if it has the marks before mentioned, must be infallibly true: not from the infallibility of any or all of the persons, but from the nature of the evidence, as before is said.

And this is the surest rule whereby to judge of doctrines, and to know what the Catholic Church had believed and taught, as received from the Apostles.

And they who refuse to be tried by this rule, who say we care not what was believed by the Catholic Church, either in former ages or now, we think our own interpretation or criticisms upon such a text of as great authority as theirs; these are justly to be suspected, nay it is evident that they are broaching some novel doctrines which cannot stand this test. Besides the monstrous arrogance in such a pretence, these overthrow the foundation of that sure and infallible evidence upon which Christianity itself does stand, and reduce all to a blind enthusiasm.—*Works*, vol. i. p. 70.

Ibid.—*Dissertation concerning Ecclesiastical History.*

In Ecclesiastical History, and there only, I may say, is the decision of all controverted points in Divinity, either as to doctrine or discipline. For every one of them must be determined by matter of fact. It is not refining, and criticisms, and our notions of things, but what that faith was, which at first was delivered to the Saints. This is matter of fact, and must be de-

terminated by evidence. And where any text of the New Testament is disputed, the best evidence is from those Fathers of the Church, who lived in the Apostolical age, and learned the faith from the mouths of the Apostles themselves, such as St. Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, &c. These must know the best sense and meaning of the words delivered by the Apostles. And next to them, they to whom they did deliver the same, and so on through the several ages of the Church to this day. And those doctrines and that government of the Church, which has this evidence, must be the truth. And they who refuse to be determined by this rule, are justly to be suspected, nay, they give evidence against themselves, that they are departed from the truth.—p. 411.

WATERLAND, PRESBYTER.—*Use and Value of Ecclesiastical Antiquity.*

It is not at all likely, that any whole Church of those early times should vary from Apostolical Doctrine in things of moment: but it is, morally speaking, absurd to imagine that all the Churches should combine in the same error, and conspire together to corrupt the doctrine of Christ. This is the argument which Irenæus and Tertullian insist much upon, and triumph in over the heretics of their times: and it is obliquely glanced upon by Hegesippus and Clemens Alexandrinus of the same second century, and by Origen also of the third. The argument was undoubtedly true and just as it then stood, while there were no breaks in the succession of doctrine, but a perfect unanimity of the Churches all along, in the prime articles: though, afterwards, the force of this argument came to be obscured, and almost lost, by taking in things foreign to it, and blending it with what happened in later times. The force of it could last no longer than such unanimity lasted. I say, while the Churches were all unanimous in the main things, (as they were in Irenæus's time and Tertullian's and for more than a century after,) that very unanimity was a presumptive argument that their faith was right, derived down to them from the Apostles themselves. For it was highly unreasonable to suppose, that those several Churches,

very distant from each other in place, and of different languages, and under no common visible head, should all unite in the same errors, and deviate uniformly from their rule at once. But that they should all agree in the same common faith, might easily be accounted for, as arising from the same common cause, which could be no other but the common delivery of the same uniform faith and doctrine to all the Churches by the Apostles themselves. Such unanimity could never come by chance, but must be derived from one common source : and therefore the harmony of their doctrine was in itself a pregnant argument of the truth of it. As to the fact, that the Churches were thus unanimous in all the prime things, in those days, Irenæus, who was a very knowing person, and who had come far east to settle in the west, bears ample testimony to it. Tertullian, in the two passages last cited from him, testifies the same thing, as to the unanimity of the Churches of those times in the fundamentals of Christian doctrine. Hegesippus, contemporary with Irenæus, gives much the same account of the succession of true doctrine, down to his own time, in the several Churches. Clemens of Alexandria means the same thing, where he recommends the faith of the Universal Church as *one*, and as more ancient than heresies. And Origen, of the third century, testifies the same of the Church in his time, and argues in the same manner from it. Irenæus and Tertullian were both of them so strongly persuaded of the certainty, first of the fact, and next of the inference from it, that they scrupled not to urge it as a very full and convincing proof of the Apostolical faith singly considered, and abstracting from Scripture proof ; an argument which there is no need to be jealous of, if it be but rightly understood, and limited to such circumstances as it was grounded upon. For the meaning was not, that Apostolical Churches could never err, nor that tradition would be always a safe rule to go by : but such tradition as that was, which might easily be traced up to the Apostles, by the help of writings then extant, (as easily as we may now trace up the doctrine of our Church to the reign of Charles, or of James the First,) such a tradition might be depended upon. Besides that the unanimity of the Churches all the world over (which

could not be rationally accounted for on any other supposition but that they had been so taught from the beginning) confirmed the same thing. The argument in this light, and in those circumstances, was a very good one. But when those circumstances came to be altered, and there had been several breaks in the succession of doctrine, and that too even in the Apostolical Churches, then there could be no arguing in the same precise way as before: only thus far they might argue in after times (upon a supposition that their faith could be proved to be the same as in the former ages), that since their doctrine was still that very doctrine which the Churches held while they were unanimous and had admitted no breaks, therefore it is such as was from the beginning in the Church of Christ. In this manner we can reason even at this day, and can thereby make Irenæus's or Tertullian's argument our own: provided we have first proved that the faith we contend for is the very same that obtained in the Churches of that age.....

It has been objected, that our sixth Article condemns the method of interpreting Scripture by antiquity, or at least supersedes it; because it says, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or necessary to salvation." The article says nothing but what is perfectly right, and perfectly consistent with all we have been pleading for. We allow no doctrine as necessary, which stands only on Fathers, or on tradition, oral or written; we admit none for such, but what is contained in Scripture, and proved by Scripture, rightly interpreted. And we know of no way more safe in necessities to preserve the right interpretation, than to take the ancients along with us. We think it a good method to secure our rule of faith, against impostures of all kinds; whether of enthusiasm or false criticism, or conceited reason, or oral tradition, or the assuming dictates of an infallible chair. If we thus preserve the true sense of Scripture, and upon that sense build our faith, we then build upon Scripture only; for the sense of Scripture is Scripture. Suppose a man were to prove his legal title to an estate;

he appeals to the laws ; the true sense and meaning of the laws must be proved by the best rules of interpretation ; but, after all, it is the law that gives the title, and that only. In like manner after using all proper means to come at the sense of Scripture, (which is Scripture,) it is that, and that only, which we ground our faith upon, and prove our faith by. We allege not Fathers as grounds, or principles, or foundations of our faith, but as witnesses, and as interpreters, and faithful conveyers.

That the Church of England has a very particular regard to antiquity, may sufficiently appear from a canon set forth in the same year when our Articles were first perfected and authorized by Act of Parliament, namely, in the year 1571. By that canon it is provided, "that preachers shall not presume to deliver any thing from the pulpit, as of moment, to be religiously observed and believed by the people, but that which is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament and collected out of the same doctrine by the Catholic Fathers and the Bishops of the ancient Church." A wise regulation, formed with exquisite judgment, and worded with the exactest caution. The Canon does not order, that they shall teach whatever had been taught by Fathers ; no, that would have been setting up a new rule of faith ; neither does it say that they shall teach whatsoever the Fathers had collected from Scripture ; no, that would have been making them infallible interpreters, or infallible reasoners : the doctrine must be found first in Scripture : only to be the more secure that we have found it there, the Fathers are to be called in, to be, as it were, constant checks upon the presumption or wantonness of private interpretation ; but then again as to private interpretation, there is liberty enough allowed to it. Preachers are not forbidden to interpret this or that text, or hundreds of texts, differently from what the Fathers have done ; provided still they keep within the analogy of faith, and presume not to raise any new doctrine : neither are they altogether restrained from teaching any thing new, provided it be offered as opinion only, or an inferior truth, and not pressed as necessary upon the people. For it was thought that there could be no necessary article of faith or doctrine now drawn from Scripture, but what the ancients had drawn out before, from the same Scripture : to say

otherwise, would imply that the ancients had failed universally in necessities, which is morally absurd.

From this account it may appear, that the Church of England is exactly in the same sentiments which I have been pleading for. And indeed, if there be any Church now in the world, which truly reverences antiquity, and pays a proper regard to it, it is this Church. The Romanists talk of Antiquity, while we observe and follow it.—*Works*, vol. v. p. 265, 316.

BINGHAM, PRESBYTER.—*Antiquities of the Christian Church.*

If it be now inquired what articles of Faith, and what points of practice were reckoned thus fundamental, or essential to the very being of a Christian, and the union of many Christians into one body or Church, the Ancients are very plain in resolving this. For as to Fundamental Articles of Faith, the Church had them always collected or summed up out of Scripture in her Creeds, the profession of which was ever esteemed both necessary on the one hand and sufficient on the other, in order to the admission of members into the Church by baptism; and consequently both necessary and sufficient to keep men in the unity of the Church, so far as concerns the unity of Faith generally required of all Christians, to make them one body and one Church of Believers. Upon this account, as I have had occasion to shew in a former book, the Creed was commonly called by the ancients the *κάνων*, and *Regula Fidei*, because it was the known standard or Rule of Faith, by which Orthodoxy and Heresy were judged and examined. If a man adhered to this rule he was deemed an Orthodox Christian, and in the union of the Catholic Faith; but if he deviated from it in any point, he was esteemed as one that cut himself off, and separated from the communion of the Church, by entertaining heretical opinions and deserting the common Faith. Thus the Fathers in the Council of Antioch charge Paulus Samosatensis with departing from the Rule of Canon, meaning the Creed, the Rule of Faith, because he denied the Divinity of CHRIST. Irenæus calls it the unalterable Canon or Rule of Faith, and says, This Faith was the same in all the world; men professed it with one heart and one soul: for though there were different dialects in the world, yet the

power of Faith was one and the same. The Churches in Germany had no other Faith or tradition than those in Spain, or in France, or in the East, or Egypt, or Libya. Nor did the most eloquent ruler of the Church say any more than this, for no one was above his master, nor the weakest diminish any thing of this tradition. For the Faith being one and the same, he that said most of it could not enlarge it, nor he that said least, take any thing from it. So Tertullian says, There is one Rule of Faith only, which admits of no change or alteration, 'That which teaches us to believe in one GOD ALMIGHTY, the Maker of the world, and in JESUS CHRIST HIS SON, &c.' This Rule, he says, was instituted by CHRIST Himself, and there were no disputes in the Church about it, but such as Heretics brought in, or such as made Heretics; to know nothing beyond this, was to know all things. This Faith was the Rule of believing from the beginning of the Gospel, and the antiquity of it was sufficiently demonstrated by the novelty of heresies, which were but of yesterday's standing in comparison of it. Cyprian says, It was the law which the whole Catholic Church held, and that the Novatians themselves baptized into the same Creed, though they differed about the sense of the Article relating to the Church. Therefore Novatian in his book of the Trinity makes no scruple to give the Creed the same name, *Regula Veritatis*, the Rule of Truth. And St. Jerome after the same manner, disputing against the errors of the Montanists, says, The first thing they differed about was the Rule of Faith. For the Church believed the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be each distinct in his own Person, though united in substance. But the Montanists, following the doctrine of Sabellius, contracted the Trinity into one Person. From all which it is evident, that the fundamental Articles of Faith were those which the Primitive Church summed up in her Creeds, in the profession of which she admitted men as members into the unity of her Body by baptism; and if any deserted or corrupted this Faith, they were no longer reputed Christians, but Heretics, who break the unity of the Church by breaking the unity of the Faith, though they had otherwise made no farther separation from her Communion. For as Clemens Alexandrinus says, out

of Hermes Pastor, Faith is the virtue that binds and unites the Church together. Whence Hegeſippus, the ancient historian, giving an account of the old Heretics, ſays, They divided the unity of the Church by pernicious ſpeeches againſt God and His CHRIST; that is, by denying ſome of the prime, fundamental Articles of Faith. He that makes a breach upon any one of theſe, cannot maintain the unity of the Church, nor his own character as a Chriſtian. We ought therefore, ſays Cyprian, in all things to hold the unity of the Catholic Church, and not to yield in any thing to the enemies of Faith and Truth. For he cannot be thought a Chriſtian who continues not in the truth of CHRIST'S Gospel and Faith. If men be Heretics, ſays Tertullian, they cannot be Chriſtians. The like is ſaid by Lactantius, and Jerome, and Athanaſius, and Hilary, and many others of the ancients, whoſe ſenſe upon this matter I have fully repreſented in another place. As, therefore, there was an unity of Faith neceſſary to be maintained in certain fundamental Articles, in order to make a man a Chriſtian, ſo theſe Articles were always to be found in the Church's Creeds; the profeſſion of which was eſteemed keeping the unity of the Faith; and deviating in any point from them, was eſteemed a breach of that one Faith, and a virtual departing from the unity of the Church.—

We are next to examine what communion different Churches held with one another, that we may diſcover the harmonious unity of the Catholic Church. And here firſt of all we are to obſerve, that as there was one common Faith, conſiſting of certain fundamental Articles, eſſential to the very being of a particular Church and its unity, and the being of a Chriſtian; ſo this ſame Faith was neceſſary to unite the different parts of the Catholic Church, and make them one body of Chriſtians. So that if any Church deſerted or deſtroyed this Faith in whole or in part; they were looked upon as rebels and traitors againſt CHRIST, and enemies to the common Faith, and treated as a conventicle of Heretics, and not of Chriſtians. Upon this account every Biſhop not only made a declaration of his Faith at his ordination, before the Provincial Synod that ordained him, but alſo ſent his circular or encyclical letters, as they were called,

to foreign Churches, to signify that he was in communion with them. And this was so necessary a thing in a Bishop newly ordained, that Liberatus tells us, the omission of it was interpreted a sort of refusal to hold communion with the rest of the world, and a virtual charge of heresy upon himself or them.

To maintain this unity of Faith entire, every Church was ready to give each other their mutual assistance to oppose all fundamental errors, and beat down heresy at its first appearance among them. The whole world in this respect was but one common Diocese, the Episcopate was an universal thing, and every Bishop had his share in it in such a manner as to have an equal concern in the whole; as I have more fully showed in another place, where I observed, that in things not appertaining to the Faith, Bishops were not to meddle with other men's Dioceses, but only to mind the business of their own: but when the Faith or welfare of the Church lay at stake, and religion was manifestly invaded, then, by this rule, of there being but one Episcopacy, every other Bishopric was as much their Diocese as their own; and no human Laws or Canons could tie up their hands from performing such acts of the Episcopal office in any part of the world, as they thought necessary for the preservation of Faith and Religion. This was the ground of their meeting in Synods, Provincial, National, and sending their joint opinions and advice from one Church to another. The greatest part of Church History is made up of such acts as these, so that it were next to impertinent to refer to any particulars. I only observe one thing farther upon this head, that the intermeddling with other men's concerns, which would have been accounted a real breach of unity in many other cases, was in this case thought so necessary, that there was no certain way to preserve the unity of the Catholic Church and Faith without it. And as an instance of this, I have noted in the fore-cited book, that though it was against the ordinary rule of the Church for any Bishop to ordain in another man's Diocese, yet in case a Bishop turned Heretic, and persecuted the Orthodox, and would ordain none but heretical men to establish Heresy in his Diocese, in that case

any Orthodox Bishop was not only authorised, but obliged, as opportunity served, and the needs of the Church required, to ordain Catholic teachers in such a Diocese, to oppose the malignant designs of the enemy, and stop the growth of Heresy, which might otherwise take deep root, and spread and overrun the Church. Thus Athanasius and the famous Eusebius of Samosata went about the world in the prevalency of the Arian heresy, ordaining in every Church where they came, such clergy as were necessary to support the Orthodox cause in such a time of distress and desolation; and this was so far from being reckoned a breach of the Church's unity, though against the letter of a Canon in ordinary cases, that it was necessary to be done, in such a state of affairs, to maintain the unity of the Catholic Faith, which every Bishop was obliged to defend, not only in his own Diocese, but in all parts of the world, by virtue of that rule which obliges Bishops in weighty affairs to take care of the Catholic Church, and requires all Churches in time of danger to give mutual aid and assistance to one another.—Vol. ii. pp. 2, 14.

JEBB, BISHOP.

But you will feel with me, that it is something in favour of Vincentius's rule, that it has been received, extolled, and acted upon, by such men as Ridley, Jewel, Grotius, Overall, Hammond, Beveridge, Bull, Hickes, Bramhall, Grabe, Cave, and our own Archbishop King; that it has been admitted expressly even by Chillingworth; and that it has been unreservedly acknowledged as a just and true guide by Bishop Taylor, in one of his latest works, his visitation sermon at Connor; a tribute, this last, the more remarkable, because, in his 'Liberty of Prophesying,' and in his 'Ductor Dubitantium,' he had spoken less respectfully of the principle; and his remarkable change of language can be accounted for only by his having undergone a correspondent change of sentiment. He had seen, felt, and weighed every difficulty; the result of all was, a deliberate persuasion, that Vincentius was right, and that he himself had been wrong. But, to say no

more of mere authorities, however strong, I own I cannot at present feel any difficulty in applying Vincentius's rule. If a doctrine is propounded to me, as vitally essential, that is, to speak technically, as matter of Faith, before I can receive it as such, I must go to the Catholic succession, and ascertain whether that doctrine has been held *semper, ubique, ab omnibus*; convinced, if it has not been so held, my assent is not due to it as a matter of Faith. If, again, a doctrine which I hold, is impugned as Heretical, next to the Scripture, and as interpretative of Scripture, I must go to the Catholic succession; and if I find this doctrine universally asserted, I cannot believe that it is any other than the sincere truth of the Gospel. The universality here mentioned, is not, of course, a mathematical, but a moral universality: the universality, to use Vincentius's own words, of those "*Qui in fide et communione Catholicæ, sancte, sapienter, et constanter viventes, vel mori in Christo fideliter, vel occidi pro Christo feliciter meruerint.*" And here, I may observe, that Vincentius himself has anticipated your great objection; a very fair one, no doubt, and which requires, and deserves an answer;—namely, 'that true Christianity, far from being diffused *ubique*, or received *ab omnibus*, was sometimes confined to a very narrow channel: when the great majority of the Bishops were Arians, what becomes of the rule?' Let Vincentius answer, *Quid si novella aliqua contagio, non jam portiunculam tantum, sed totam pariter Ecclesiam commaculare conetur. Tunc item providebit ut Antiquitati inhæreat.* Nor be it thought, that by this means, the *quod ubique*, and *quod ab omnibus*, are idly absorbed in the *quod semper*: they are, as above hinted, to be taken, not mathematically, but morally; and, so taken, they are an effectual guard to the *quod semper*. From the beginning, or, at least, from very remote antiquity, worthy individuals have frequently held, some one or more, unsound opinions; and looking to individuals merely, the *quod semper* might be alleged, as it has been alleged, in favour of every opinion: it is to be rectified, however, by looking to universality and consent: not universality without exception—for such is not to be found: but the concurrent, and consistent sentiments, of the

most, and greatest, doctors, in the whole body of the Church : not at any given period, but throughout the whole succession. Nor will such a research be so laborious as might be imagined ; for, in the first place, the Catholic verities, those to be believed for necessity of salvation, are but few ; and in the next place, the concurrent sense of Catholic Christians, on those few, but important points, has been amply elicited by controversy ; inso-much that, from the works of Bishop Bull, and a very few more, any candid and intelligent student might obtain competent and intelligent satisfaction, respecting the sense of the universal Church, on any and every of the Catholic verities. As to all other verities, and as to the interpretation of particular texts of Scripture, they are left at large, provided always that no Catholic truth be impugned, and that the analogy of the Faith be maintained inviolable.—*Life*, vol. ii. pp. 249—252.

VAN MILDERT, BISHOP.—*Bampton Lectures.*

Much discussion has from time to time arisen respecting the deference due to the writings of the Primitive Fathers of the Church, and the use and value of ecclesiastical antiquity ; points of considerable moment, and deserving of attentive examination.

It seems to be indisputable, that the Primitive Fathers are not to be regarded as Divinely inspired, since otherwise their writings would necessarily have formed a part of the Sacred Canon. The question, therefore, is, whether, admitting them to have no more than human authority, they have any special claim to our reverential regard, which places them on higher ground than that of their ecclesiastical successors. And this question is to be determined by a fair consideration of any peculiar advantages they might possess, and of their ability and disposition to turn them to good account.

Against any such deference being had to these our spiritual forefathers, it has been sometimes contended, that their writings now extant are few in number ; that several of them, if not spurious, are adulterated, through the pious frauds, the sinister designs, or the ignorance of after ages ; that their style and reasoning are

obscure ; that in their zeal to defeat opponents, they occasionally suppress or disguise the truth ; that they are on certain points inconsistent with each other, and with themselves ; and that it is often difficult to ascertain whether the opinions they advance are meant to be declaratory of the judgment of the Church, or delivered only as their own private interpretations. For these and similar reasons it has been alleged, that their testimony as genuine witnesses of the Faith may deservedly be impeached ; and that neither Protestants nor Papists have hesitated occasionally to depart from their authority.

But of these charges it has repeatedly been shown, that many are greatly exaggerated ; some wholly unfounded ; while others affect not their writings, more than the writings of almost all controversial authors of ancient date, adverting (as they must necessarily do) to times and persons, and local circumstances, now but imperfectly known, and which cast a shade of obscurity over some of their narratives and their reasonings. These afford no good argument for laying their productions under a general interdict. Against an implicit submission to their authority, they are, doubtless, important considerations : but against the use and application of them as documents of more than ordinary value, they merit but little attention.

In answer, therefore, to such objections, it may suffice to observe, that supposing the Primitive Fathers to have been men of only common discernment and integrity, their testimony respecting the doctrines then actually received by the Church, and maintained against the heresies then prevailing, must have peculiar weight. Those among them who had been personally conversant with the Apostles, and who derived their knowledge of the Christian Faith from what they continually heard of their preaching and discourse, as well as from their writings, seem to have claim to a regard only short of that which was due to their inspired preceptors. To place such men as Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, no higher in the scale of authority, with respect to the value of their testimony on these points, than Bishops and Pastors in later times, betrays an error of judgment which on any other subject of investigation analogous to this, would be

deemed preposterous. On the part of their immediate successors, somewhat of the same extraordinary claim to acceptance still presents itself, though with a certain diminution of its force. Descending still lower in the scale of history, this authority rapidly diminishes, and our judgment in their favour will be chiefly, if not solely, influenced, by the internal evidence their writings afford of some superior qualifications in the authors themselves. Yet, until the great schism between the Eastern and Western Churches, and the full establishment of the Papal usurpation, the Fathers of the Church appear to have been deeply sensible of the obligation laid upon them to "contend for the Faith once delivered to the saints," and to guard the sacred deposit committed to their charge against every vain imagination which the Heretic or Schismatic might labour to introduce.

Disclaiming, therefore, any superstitious reverence towards these venerable men, it may reasonably be urged, that their peculiarly advantageous circumstances demand especial consideration; and that unless their characters, both moral and intellectual, could be so successfully impeached as to prove them wholly unworthy of credit, their testimony is of the very first importance in ascertaining the Primitive Faith. In matters requisite to the formation of the Church; in framing Confessions of Faith, more or less explicit according to the errors it was necessary to discountenance; and in adopting means for the perpetuation of these benefits to the latest ages; they appear, as having been at first deputed by the Apostles for purposes the most important, and as acting under impressions of a most awful responsibility. To them were also confided those Sacred Oracles on which our Faith now most essentially depends. Through their ministry we have received these invaluable treasures; to their zeal and fidelity, under Providence, we owe the transmission of the pure word of God to these present times; and the charge thus consigned to our care, we are bound to deliver unimpaired to succeeding generations.

If, in addition to these special grounds of confidence in the early Fathers, we admit what has been contended for by learned and judicious Divines, that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit,

(especially that of "discerning of Spirits,") were not entirely withdrawn from the Church till long after the time of the Apostles ; this would give still stronger confirmation to their claims. For though we should not be warranted in a supposition that even these extraordinary gifts conferred authority for promulgating new articles of Faith, or infringing on any exclusive prerogative of the Sacred writers, yet it would go far towards establishing interpretations of Christian Doctrine thus received and sanctioned, on a firmer basis than any on which their less gifted successors can ground their pretensions.

But, not to insist on any disputable points, the use and value of ecclesiastical antiquity in general, and of its earliest productions in particular, is sufficiently evident, upon the ordinary principles of criticism and evidence. As works so nearly contemporary with those of the Sacred Canons, they illustrate the diction and phraseology of the inspired Penmen ; they give an insight into the history of the age in which the writings of the New Testament were composed ; they explain allusions to rites and customs, which otherwise might be involved in much obscurity ; and, what is of still more importance, they assist in fixing the sense of controverted texts of Scripture, by the substantial evidence they afford of their generally received interpretation in the primitive ages of the Church. These advantages are derived to us from the public acts of the Church recorded in the most ancient ecclesiastical histories ; from the prescribed formularies of Faith then in general use : and from the censures authoritatively passed upon such as departed from these standards of reputed orthodoxy. Hence we are assured of the care and solicitude manifested from the beginning by spiritual rulers, to preserve the truth from corruption : and when the importance of the doctrines themselves, as well as the opportunities they enjoyed of tracing them to the fountain head, are duly considered ; it can hardly be conceived, that they who had the guidance and government of the Primitive Church, should either be universally uninformed as to any fundamental truth, or universally embrace any fundamental error.

It is, therefore, with no common reverence that these authori-

ties are to be regarded ; nor can we detract from their just pretensions without hazard to some of the main foundations of our Faith. " No man " says Bishop Bull, " can oppose Catholic consent, but he will at last be found to oppose both the Divine Oracles and sound reason." Nevertheless, we do not claim for them any infallibility, any commission to make further revelations of the Divine will, or any absolute authority as Scripture interpreters. The appeal still lies from them, as from all other religious instructors, to that Word itself, which was no less their Rule of Faith than it is ours : and the highest degree of deference that can be due to them, may be paid without any infringement of that inviolable maxim, " If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."—*Sermon v. p. 94.*

OXFORD.

The Feast of the Purification.

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